



£150k REVAMP OF SHOPS AREA

BY MARION BRENNAN

A CASH windfall of £150,000 is to be spent on Cannock town centre under plans to help offset the impact of the new Mill Green designer outlet village.

Better car parking, the modernisation of the indoor market and a reward scheme to encourage loyalty are among the proposals put forward as part of the revamp package.

Work on the £115 million Mill Green development is due to start in 2016 now that the Secretary of State for Local Government has given the scheme the green light. The 130-outlet centre was referred to him because of its size.

Meanwhile, it has been announced that drivers travelling to the complex via the M6 Toll might not have to pay a fee.

Talks are in progress to waive the usual cost, with drivers paying upfront but having the cost refunded at Mill Green. Cannock Chase Council leader George Adamson said: "Nothing has been decided yet but the idea, and it's a good one, is on the table."

A spokesman for Midland Expressway, which operates the M6 Toll, said: "We are in ongoing dialogue with the developers."

Following concerns over the potential negative effect of the new complex, Cannock Chase Council has asked for £150,000 as part of the deal with the developers.

Concerns

The cash would be handed over in three instalments of £50,000 over three years. Councillor Adamson said: "I understand people's fears but I think Mill Green will have a positive impact on Cannock, rather than the opposite."

"People in Bicester had the same concerns when their designer outlet village was built but the town has gone from strength to strength."

As part of the town centre revamp, an extension of the Friday market, offering more specialist stalls, and the upgrading of buildings and signage have also been put forward.

The council's economic leader Gordon Alcott said the plans could lead to a complete remodelling of the town, with car parks being sited where shops now stand and shops built on sites currently occupied by car parks.

"This will all emerge in consultation with traders and property owners," he said.

"We don't want to do this in a piecemeal way, we want to have an over-arching plan."

He said older shop premises in Wolverhampton Road, New Penkridge Road and Market Hall Street would be among the first to be upgraded. "This is good news for Cannock," he added.

The Mill Green planning application was submitted in February this year by development partners U+I and Rioja Developments and approved in November. The decision of the committee was unanimous.

● Delighted - Page 16

FIVE INJURED AS BUS AND CARS IN SMASH



Emergency crews at the scene of the accident involving a bus and two cars on the A34 Cannock Road in Penkridge

FIVE people were injured in a collision involving a bus and two cars in Penkridge. West Midlands Ambulance Service was called to Cannock Road shortly before 9am on Christmas Eve.

Four ambulance crews, a paramedic area support officer in a rapid response vehicle and the Midlands Air Ambulance from Cosford attended.

A paramedic officer who was on her way to work and was in the area at the time was also assigned to the case.

"One of the car drivers, a man in his 50s, had a head injury," an ambulance service spokesman said. "Following assessment and treatment at the scene he was taken by land ambulance to Royal Stoke University Hospital."

"The other car driver had chest and leg pains. He was immobilised as a precaution and was taken to the County Hospital in Stafford. The driver of the bus also had chest and leg pains. He was taken to New Cross Hospital."

There were two passengers on the bus - a man who was in shock and a woman with a mouth injury. They were both taken to the minor injury

unit at Cannock." The accident happened outside Buxtons garden machinery suppliers, with staff saying that they heard the impact.

Meanwhile, a driver was injured when her car veered off the road in Rugeley and smashed into a lamp post. The road was blocked for around an hour as emergency services worked at the scene, in Horse Fair in the town centre.

Fire crews helped paramedics to release the woman, in her 40s, from the vehicle after the alert was raised at 7.08am on Monday.

Ambulance service spokesman Murray MacGregor said smoke was billowing from the wreckage but there was no fire.

The driver was taken to County Hospital with neck pain, although her injuries were not believed to be life-threatening.

Elsewhere, two people were taken to hospital after a two-car crash in Wobaston Road, Wolverhampton, at midday on Christmas Eve.

In another two-car accident, in Newton Road, West Bromwich, two men were injured. The smash happened at 3am on Christmas Eve.



One of the cars following the collision

POLICE

Man charged over cricket club fracas

A WALSALL man has been charged after a fracas at Cannock Cricket and Hockey Club last summer.

Simon Westwood is accused of assault occasioning actual bodily harm.

The 29-year-old from Meadow Road has been bailed by police and will appear before Cannock Magistrates Court in January.

The incident at the Morris Ground in Four Crosses happened on August 22.

Two other men were arrested on suspicion of assault. They have been released by police due to a lack of evidence.

TECHNOLOGY

4G arrives in £2bn Vodafone scheme

RESIDENTS and businesses in Great Wyrley are to benefit from Vodafone's investment in its 4G network.

The arrival of Vodafone 4G in the area is part of a £2 billion programme the firm is rolling out across the UK.

It means customers in Great Wyrley with compatible devices and bundles will be able to connect to the internet more quickly, more reliably and in more places. Vodafone has now extended its 4G coverage to 726 larger cities, towns and districts.

CAMPAIGN

Legal loophole lets Josh attackers off

TWO thugs who left a 20-year-old Cannock man brain damaged will not have their prison sentences extended - because of a legal loophole.

More than 4,000 people have signed a petition calling for James Robb and Alistair Douglas to have their jail terms lengthened after the attack on Josh Morgan. Robb, 23, and Douglas, 26, were sentenced to three years and 27 months respectively. But the Attorney General's Office has said there is no mechanism to review the sentences because convictions of grievous bodily harm cannot be sent to the Court of Appeal.

● CCTV - Page 5



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Travel apprentices set out on journey



Oliver Maye

A YOUNG travel agent's career has taken off after securing an apprenticeship with The Midlands Co-operative Society.

Oliver Maye, aged 18, from Cannock, is one of six people to secure a place on the Co-operative Travel apprenticeship scheme.

Oliver, who now works in the Hawks Green branch, had always dreamed of working in the travel industry after college but settled for a job in a supermarket to help pay his way. He said: "I

was so happy when I found out that I had been accepted onto the scheme. It's a great chance to get hands-on experience."

The apprenticeship at Co-operative Travel pairs Oliver with a mentor from the business, who gives him tasks to expand his knowledge. He also works alongside 15 experienced colleagues in the Hawks Green branch who share day-to-day advice.

Meanwhile, Amy Baker, also 18 and from Cannock, studied travel and tourism at Stafford

College before gaining employment as a travel adviser for Co-operative Travel.

She said: "I didn't know what I wanted to do after my GCSEs until I saw the course online."

"I enjoyed geography at school and was passionate about providing a service to the public, so I thought travel and tourism incorporated both of these."

Amy shared her top tips for getting into the industry: "Work hard and always persevering will get you the career you want."



Amy Baker

Council leader hits out over police attitudes

THE leader of Cannock Chase Council has criticised Staffordshire Police in the wake of a damning report that said it demonstrated 'judgmental and unsupportive' attitudes to some victims of domestic abuse.

The force came under scrutiny following the publication of the report by Her Majesty's Inspectorate Constabulary.

It gave the force the lowest possible rating of 'inadequate' for protecting vulnerable victims.

The authors found cases where victims were judged to have invented allegations before investigations had even started, while officers discouraged some victims from reporting domestic abuse crimes.

Councillor George Adamson, leader of Cannock Chase Council, said there are 'huge, systemic issues' within the police.

"The buck must stop with the Police and Crime Commissioner," he said.

He has skirted the issue. Matthew Ellis, as police and crime commissioner, is ultimately accountable for these failings."

Finances

The Police and Crime Commissioner defended himself by saying the force has one of the best rates in the country for identifying vulnerable people.

He also pointed to the work he has done to improve finances for Staffordshire Police force.

"The situation is a complex one and I believe George Adamson has to understand the part his authority needs to play in improving domestic abuse in his area," Mr Ellis said.

"We are the second best performing force in the country for identifying vulnerable people and although I wouldn't deny more work is needed to protect them after identification, our record of identification shouldn't be overlooked."

"I have managed to increase funds for Staffordshire Police during a time when pretty much every force in the country has seen a decrease and I think it is short-sighted to suggest that there is only bad news to look at here."

"I have also set up an oversight group to ensure that the work that needs to be done gets done quickly and properly."

White House for sale at £500,000



The White House, one of Cannock's most impressive town centre buildings, is on the market at £500,000

HUNDREDS of couples have been married there and thousands have been taught within its elegant walls. Now, one of Cannock's best-known buildings has gone on the market with a £500,000 price tag.

The White House, an imposing Grade II-listed property in the town centre, has been declared surplus by South Staffordshire College and is up for sale.

Two companies have already bid to snap up the premises, in High Green. The building has gone through several guises since it was built as a family home in 1783 for Sir Robert Fisher, with the distinction

of being the first house in Cannock to have its own water pump.

Among its occupants was Captain William Cary, who attended Rugeley Grammar School and became Lord Lieutenant of Staffordshire, and one of the town's biggest ever employers, businessman Frederick Gilpin, who owned several factories in the district.

During the 1800s, the White House became a boarding school and changed hands several more times until it was bought in 1927 by Cannock Urban District Council who opened part of the building as a register office. In the 1980s it was

acquired by the county council for Cannock Chase Technical College.

Russell Rigby, of Rigby & Co, which is handling the sale, said it was highly unusual for a building set in such substantial grounds to be found in a town centre.

Mr Rigby said: "The place is an absolute oasis, the setting is beautiful. You don't find grounds like this in any town centre, let alone Cannock. It could be returned to residential use again, although the offers we've had so far have all been from commercial businesses."

The house will remain on the market until the end of this month.

Brave Hazel impresses crowds at fundraiser

A THREE-YEAR-OLD girl with a rare chromosome disorder took part in a fundraising drive in Cannock.

Hazel Stockill took part in the sixth Newlife Santa Dash in Cannock town centre last month. Bank Bar and Lounge owner Alastair Payne was first over the finishing line – but it was little Hazel, from Cannock, with her walking frame who wowed the crowds.

Hazel's mother Clair Stockill said: "We knew about Newlife because several of our friends' children have received specialist equipment from the charity. We have just applied for a loan of a Play Therapy Pod of specialist toys to help with Hazel's development."

The family raised £430 for Newlife, while the event total was in excess of £1,000 – all of which will be used to provide disability equipment for children in Staffordshire.

Clair said: "Hazel really loved taking part in the Newlife Santa Dash – she was laughing all the time, and she didn't want to take her Santa hat off all day."

Newlife community fundraising manager Nora Smith said: "The Newlife Santa Dash is a great opportunity for friends and family to get together for a bit of festive fun – and raise money to help local disabled children. Little Hazel was a real star."



Hazel Stockill

Trader fined for fake Frozen dolls

A BURNTWOOD shopkeeper has been ordered to pay £740 for selling counterfeit Disney Frozen dolls with potentially harmful levels of chemical content.

Gavinder Singh Mehat, aged 23, of Eastgate Street, was found to be selling the dolls at his store on December 14.

He pleaded guilty at Stafford Magistrates Court to Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading breaches and Trade Mark Act offences, and was fined £240 and ordered to pay £500 costs.

The counterfeit dolls were found to have 200 times the permitted level of phthalates – a group of chemicals which are used to make plastics more flexible and durable. Trading standards officers found that although Mehat asked his supplier for safety certificates, they did not relate to the products.

Dates for blood donor sessions

A BLOOD donor session will be held on January 25, from 1pm to 7.30pm, at the Church of the Latter Day Saints in New Penkridge Road, Cannock.

Sessions will also be held on February 15 and March 14. To find out about dates and venues, call 0300 123 2323.

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Courses in how to use life-saving equipment

NEW first aid courses are being run by St John Ambulance to show people how to use a defibrillator.

The idea is to give more people in Staffordshire the confidence to use the life-saving equipment in an emergency. The courses teaching AED awareness will include sessions in Hednesford on Saturday, January 16 between 10am and 1.30pm, and Rugeley on Monday, February 22 from 6.30pm to 10pm.

Automated external defibrillators – or AEDs – are increasingly found in public places and are simple enough to be used by anyone, but not everyone has the confidence to use one.

The first-aid charity is offering the AED introduction as a bolt-on to its Essential First Aid (All Ages) course throughout this year. Other sessions in Staffordshire will be held in Burton on Trent, Cheadle and Stafford.

Places on the course cost £30. Booking is essential. To find out more or to book a place, call 0121 237 3879 or email west-mids-training@sja.org.uk

Meanwhile, the charity is offering primary and secondary schools in Staffordshire free first-aid lessons and teaching resources after receiving funding from the Department for Education to help young people develop confidence and community spirit.

The Government's Character Education grant will allow St John Ambulance to train 100,000 young people in life-saving skills. The charity is aiming to engage 30 schools in the West Midlands region and 600 nationally through the funding.

Two face trial on raid bid at pub

TWO men are to face trial after being charged with attempted burglary at a Great Wyrley pub.

The alleged incident happened at The Wheatsheaf in Walsall Road on Wednesday last week.

Jamie Hopson, aged 21, of Vaughan Road, and Liam Baker, 20, of Stafford Street, both Willenhall, are also charged with breaking into a Superdrug shop and taking £4,800 of perfume on the same day.

Hopson is also charged with dangerous driving, and driving while disqualified and with no insurance.

The alleged Superdrug burglary happened in Market Place, Willenhall.

Both men will appear at Wolverhampton Crown Court on March 17. Both were remanded in custody.

Half marathon sign-up begins

THE Cannock Chase Half Marathon will take place this year on May 7.

Entry costs £22 in advance and the race is limited to 600 places. It starts at Milford Common at 11am. Visit www.cannockchasehalf.co.uk

Force dog sniffs out illegal immigrants



Nico after sniffing out the suspects

MORE than a dozen suspected illegal immigrants from Vietnam were rooted out in Cannock – including four hiding beneath a pile of tyres – thanks to the sterling efforts of a Staffordshire police dog.

Immigration and police officers swooped on the town after reports of an incident involving people who had entered the country illegally.

A National Police Air Service helicopter hovered overhead while officers patrolled the streets, but it was four-year-old German Shepherd Nico who made the key discoveries. Nico's

handler Pc Rich Birkin took him on a search at a landfill site and within 15 minutes he had sniffed out six people.

Then just over an hour later Nico found four more beneath a pile of tyres on a road near the site.

Later, at about 7.15pm, Pc Birkin and his trusty sidekick were present when two more people were found at a nearby store. Home Office spokeswoman Catherine Ellis said: "Immigration enforcement officers were contacted by Staffordshire police on Friday, December 11 after police officers attended an incident in

Cannock. Police officers arrested 18 Vietnamese people on suspicion of entering the UK illegally.

"Six adults have been ordered to report regularly to the Home Office while their cases are progressed, and 12 minors have been passed into the care of social services."

Nico and Pc Birch are based in Stafford but cover several areas throughout the county including Cannock, Rugeley, Burntwood and Lichfield. Compliments flooded in for the pooch after Staffs Dogs and Armed Response posted his heroics on social media.

Town's station top of the hush-hour league

CANNOCK was found to have the quietest station in a survey carried in the West Midlands region out by the rail regulator.

The station had 221,124 entries and exits in one year – a fall of almost 11 per cent on 2013-14 due to service disruptions caused by engineering work to electrify the Chase Line.

The £76 million scheme will enable electric trains to run between Rugeley and Walsall. To make room for overhead lines, bridges have already been rebuilt and the track lowered at a number of locations between the two towns.

The 'top of the stops' report, released by the Office of Rail and Road, recorded 'entries and exits' based on the total number of people travelling to or from the station.

Wolverhampton was the busiest station, with almost 4.5 million entries and exits in the last year – a rise of more than two per cent on the previous year – while Sandwell & Dudley recorded the biggest increase.

Nationally the total number of estimated entries and exits at Britain's stations between April 2014 and March 2015 reached nearly 2.8 billion, which represented an increase of more than 119 million.

Demand

All of the 10 busiest rail stations were in London, with Waterloo at the top, except Birmingham New Street, which came eighth in the list, with more than 35.3 million entries and exits.

Walsall was the second busiest station in the West Midlands, with 1.3 million journeys – a rise of 1.6 per cent – followed by Sandwell & Dudley, which was up 5.4 per cent to 831,756 entries and exits.

Dudley Port recorded 421,370 journeys in the 12 months up until April – a rise of 0.6 per cent – while Cosely, with 411,584 entries and exits, saw a 1.1 per cent increase.

A Department for Transport spokesman said: "These figures are proof that Britain's railways are booming, which is why we are investing record amounts in building a world-class railway that can meet this demand."

The Chase Line scheme includes work at Hednesford, Cannock, Landwood and Bloxwich stations. Network Rail recently confirmed that the project will be completed by December 2017 as originally planned, quashing fears that it would be put on hold. The rail operator has included the scheme in its recently published five-year funding programme.



Jason Ramsdale and his partner Jane Easton are looking to raise a £15,000 deposit to take up a lease on The Pied Piper in Cannock

Launch of £15k drive to save pub

A FORMER tenant has launched an appeal to raise £15,000 to save a Cannock pub which is at risk of being turned into a shop.

Jason Ramsdale lived in The Pied Piper in Pye Green Road more than 10 years ago when it was run by his aunt and uncle.

Now, the 30-year-old of Andover Place, Hednesford, has launched a fundraising bid to stump up the cash for a deposit.

He estimates it will cost £30,000 a year to rent.

It comes after former footballer Stan Collymore from Cannock vowed to support any bid to save the pub.

Mr Ramsdale said: "I used to live there – that's where I got started as a pub landlord – so I already have a personal connection to it."

"I have been in pubs ever since, and I have now got my own licence."

He said he had spoken to estate agents to express his interest and is confident the pub could be run sustainably in the future.

He urged anyone interested in donating to the fund or offering support to get in touch via his Facebook page 'Jason Ramsdale'.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Lisa wins gym's hamper prize

BURNTWOOD Leisure Centre has announced the winner of its annual Christmas hamper – the prize in a draw for members of its gym, Inspire Fitness.

This year, the winner was Lisa Chmielewska, who has been a member of Inspire for 10 years. She was presented with her prize by Inspire gym instructor Mark Adams.

Councillor Andy Smith, cabinet member for leisure and parks at Lichfield District Council, said: "Well done to Lisa and thank you to all our members for taking part."

Repaving work with 'old' look

WORK to replace traditional-style paving in the centre of Lichfield is set to start on January 18.

The stones were laid in 2007 but have begun to break and come loose.

But now, through partnership work by Staffordshire County Council, Lichfield District Council and Lichfield City Council, a replacement programme will be carried out in streets including Conduit Street, Market Street and Breadmarket Street.

The new stones are mechanically finished to create a distressed and aged look, while being more durable.

Market man held in fraud inquiry

A TRADER on Cannock market has been arrested on suspicion of fraud.

Staffordshire Police confirmed they had spoken to a 70-year-old man from Telford. He has been accused of suspicion of fraud by false representation.

Cannock Chase Council, which runs the market, had received about 15 complaints from customers after he had not been seen for months.

The force confirmed that the man had been bailed until March while further inquiries took place.

Three firms are lined up for HS2 rail build

THREE companies have been appointed to prepare to build HS2 through Staffordshire.

Ove Arup & Partners International Ltd, WSP Parsons Brinckerhoff, and Mouchel Ltd have won contracts for the £55.7 billion scheme. The companies will also help HS2 Ltd prepare a second hybrid bid to provide the powers to bring the new rail link through the county to Crewe by 2027.

The line is set to be built five years earlier than previously planned.

Thefts from vehicles

TOOLS were stolen when thieves broke into two vehicles in Norton Green Lane, Norton Canes. A Stihl saw, cutter, Dewart drill, and grinder were among the items taken. Anyone with information should call police on 101 using the reference numbers 75 and 82 of December 18.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



THE art of successful public relations is to choose your figures wisely. For example, it is reported that nine out of ten hospitals are short of nurses. This is bad news, but only because the unit of measurement is individual nurses. A smart PR operator, noting the size of so many NHS employees, would point out that the total national weight of nurses is actually rising and the tonnage-per-patient ratio has never been higher. Another success story. More chocolates, sister?

I WROTE last week about how moon landings were routine in the 20th century. A reader reminds me that on one Apollo mission in 1971, having run out of sensible things to do on the moon, astronaut Alan Shepard smuggled his golf kit on the mission and drove a golf ball, as he put it, "for miles and miles and miles." May the "fore!" be with you.

WE Brits are a bit shy about our national identity. We don't put our nation's name on postage stamps. We don't know all the words to our national anthem. And we certainly don't have a national dress. Or so I thought until Miss Great Britain, confusingly called Nena France, popped up at the Miss Universe contest in Las Vegas wearing what we are assured is British national dress. It consists of a bejewelled red, white and blue basque, fishnet tights, thonged sandals and enormous showgirl feathers towering over one's head. I've ordered mine already.

HERE'S a lovely Xmas present for Prince Charles and his wife, a full-page feature in the Daily Mail headlined: "We could do a lot worse than Camilla, as our Queen." And in the Sunday Times, another headline: "Admit it: We've come to love Camilla." Expect more of the same. It is part of the softening-up process to persuade the nation, after the Queen's death, to accept Camilla not as queen consort, as the Palace has always promised, but as Queen Camilla.

THE truth is that the queen-consort ruse was nothing more than a temporary measure to placate the Diana fan club. I bet Camilla's queenly crown has already been ordered.

I RECENTLY suggested that in the first Star Wars movie, C3PO delivered Princess Leia's message. It was, of course, R2D2. Apologising to robots; has it come to this?

NEW research suggests there was some truth in that old British marching song, to the tune of Colonel Bogey. Records from before the war reveal that Hitler had one undescented testicle. Then what of Himmler? Was he, as the same song suggests, very similar? And was Goebbels entirely lacking?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

Rural group mark 80th anniversary

THE Staffordshire branch of the Campaign to Protect Rural England plan to celebrate their 80th anniversary in 2016 in full photographic style.

The group are marking the occasion with the launch of a photography contest to showcase the scenic splendour of the county's rural and natural landscapes. CPRE Staffordshire is aiming for a big response to

its big birthday and is inviting people of all ages, to submit their pictures.

The executive committee, chaired by Mr Amyas Stafford Northcote, will choose 80 pictures to be exhibited at a series of events across the county and online. A CPRE Staffordshire calendar, featuring the most popular pictures as voted for by the public, will be produced for 2017 in memory of CPRE Staffordshire sup-

porters Frances Beryl Johnson and Edward Thomas Ash.

There are two age categories – 18-and-under and adults – and the prizes include family photograph portrait sessions, donated by JS Simnett Photographers of Burton and Click Photography Ltd of Stafford, and photography experiences and tuition donated by Amanda White Photography and Jessops. The clos-

ing date for entries is June 30, 2016.

Judges will be looking to exhibit an array of pictures spanning the seasons. Photographs, which should feature natural and rural landscapes in Staffordshire, can be submitted to cprestaffs80@outlook.com or good-quality prints may be sent (with an SAE for return) to CPRE Staffs, Wedgwood Building, Block A, Tipping Street, Stafford ST16 2HD.

Order on pervert, 39, over computer images

By Marion Brennan

A HEDNESFORD man who downloaded pornographic pictures of young girls from the internet was spared a jail sentence by a judge.

Images of girls as young as three being sexually abused were found on Scott Townsend's laptop computer, Stafford Crown Court heard.

An inspection of the computer revealed he had been searching the internet for child porn. Townsend, 39, of Belt Road, who admitted five charges of making indecent images of children, was given a three-year community order with a sex offender treatment programme and ordered to pay £500 costs.

Judge Michael Chambers QC told him: "You deliberately searched for and downloaded images of child pornography from the internet.

"It is no bad thing to remind ourselves of the nature of these images," said the judge, who went on to describe one shocking photo of a girl, possibly only three-years-old, being vilely abused.

Serious

"Two things have saved you from an immediate sentence of imprisonment – in your case, there are relatively few images, and you have indicated you recognise you do have a problem and you are willing to work with the probation service."

Mr William Dudley, prosecuting, said police executed a search warrant at Townsend's home on April 4, 2014 and seized his laptop. On it were a total of 22 indecent images of children, including nine in the most serious category A, 10 in category B and three in category C. All featured girls under the age of 10.

When questioned Townsend said he had inadvertently downloaded images of children but the evidence showed he used specific search terms on a notorious file sharing site.

Mrs Liz DeOliveira, defending, said Townsend was a socially isolated man who had taken to using cannabis and alcohol to excess, which led him to make poor decisions.

First tenants move into new homes



From left, housing chief Councillor Frank Allen, council leader Councillor George Adamson, Andrew Mason of Keepmoat Homes, and tenant Sarah Tunsley

THE first new council houses in Cannock for a quarter of a century have got their first tenants.

Properties at Patterdale Road and Kingsway were completed on the Moss Road Estate in Chads Moor in November. When finished, the development will feature 65 council houses and 76 on the open market ranging from two to three-bedroom homes. It is hoped the entire scheme will be completed by spring 2018.

The homes are part of Cannock Chase Council's long-term plan to deliver 129 homes over the next three years.

Housing chief Councillor Frank Allen said: "We are delighted to be delivering the first new council housing in a quarter of a century and to be redeveloping this estate, providing high-quality family housing for the residents of the area." Representatives from the council

as well as Keepmoat Homes held a ceremony at the estate to welcome the new arrivals. The housebuilder was recognised with an 'excellent' rating in the Considerate Constructors Scheme for their work on the site.

Keepmoat regional managing director Paul Degg said: "Working in partnership with Cannock Chase Council, we are delighted to offer affordable new homes to local people as part of the Moss Road regeneration scheme."

All 76 of the private homes will be on sale with the Help to Buy scheme allowing buyers to purchase with a five per cent deposit. Last month the Chronicle reported that there were currently more than 1,100 families on the council's waiting list. In defence of the figures the council argued that homes were allocated to people who need them ahead of those that simply 'want' one.

'Do not bin it' plea on electrical appliances

PEOPLE in Staffordshire are being urged to recycle their unwanted and faulty electrical items as part of a new campaign.

Every year, thousands of household electrical appliances get thrown in the bin to make way for new items that have been bought as presents.

This year, a new campaign is calling on people to take their old televisions, DVD players, gaming consoles, stereos and grooming products to a household waste recycling centre (HWRC) where the items will be recycled.

Once recycled, electrical items would be turned into other items and given a new lease of life.

Any items that can be reused would be sent to the Reuse Shop at Cannock where the items would be tested and then sold on to the public.

"It is at this time of year when we all tend to have a bit of a clear-out, but this year we're asking people not to throw away their old electrical items but to recycle them instead," Councillor Mark Winnington, cabinet member for the economy, environment and transport at Staffordshire County Council, said.

Increasing recycling here in Staffordshire remains a priority for us – it's good for the environment, and for the planet, and can save local tax payers money too."

Staffordshire has 14 HWRCs where electrical goods can be recycled. Other recycling initiatives are available at each facility, including materials such as carpets and mattresses. Visit www.recycleanappliance.co.uk for details.

Medical centre extension plan

PLANNING applications received by Lichfield District Council include:

Springhill Medical Centre, 154 Cannock Road, Burntwood – two-storey side extension to form a one-bedroom dwelling and associated works.

Mill Cottage, Mill Lane, Hammerwich – single-storey rear extension to form kitchen and utility room.

Windmill Farm, Stockings Lane, Upper Longdon – agricultural determination: extension to barn for storage of cattle feed and bedding (straw).

The Long Barn, Abnalls Lane, Lichfield – single-storey detached building to serve as cart shed/log store, single-storey rear extension to form entrance to barn and installation of five rooflights.

Comments about any of the applications must be received by January 11.

Thieves target Land Rover at storage unit

WHEEL arches were stolen from a Land Rover Discovery which was targeted in Cannock.

The incident happened at a vehicle storage unit at a business in North Street. Contact police on 101 using the reference 530 of December 18.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

Tablers bring in £4k for charities

MORE than £4,000 has been raised for charities in Staffordshire thanks to a Santa's sleigh project. Each year, members of Penkridge Round Table take a sleigh around the streets of the town as well as Wheaton Aston, Acton Trussell, Bednall, Lapley, Huntington and other villages. In two weeks the collected a total of £4,107. For 2015 the group invested in a new sleigh for the tours. Round Table member Tim Rowlands said: "It isn't about the money - it's about bringing the communities together and seeing all the smiles."

Hygiene scores plea is backed

A PUBLIC health watchdog has decided to back Lichfield MP Michael Fabricant's campaign to get hygiene scores on the doors of restaurants and other food outlets. "I met with Tim Bennett, the chairman of the national Food Standards Agency, at the House of Commons," Mr Fabricant said. "He had contacted me following the launch of my hygiene campaign. I am delighted that the Food Standards Agency are now backing my proposal to make it law that all restaurants and food shops in England must display hygiene scores on the doors."

Jumpers raise £650 for trust

GENEROUS pupils have raised hundreds of pounds for the Teenage Cancer Trust - a charity chosen after Stephen Sutton's cancer battle. Students and staff at Highfields Secondary School in Penn donned their Christmas jumpers as they raised more than £650 for the charity. The staff and students made a token donation to wear the jumpers. Stephen chronicled his battle with bowel cancer - and the help the charity gave him - before his death in 2014.

Reindeer in barn fire led to safety

REINDEER had to be moved from a barn at a farm in Staffordshire after a fire broke out. Firefighters were sent to Blithbury Reindeer Lodge near Abbots Bromley to extinguish the blaze. Investigators believe it started accidentally and confirmed that one woman at the lodge was given oxygen. The fire service said they spent nearly two hours tackling the blaze at the site in Uttoxeter Road. The venue was open the next day. All the reindeer were said to be 'absolutely fine'.

First walk of the year

CHASE Ramblers begin their 2016 programme of outings on Sunday with a 10-mile easy/moderate walk along canals and across commons. The start point is the Chasewater Innovation Centre for a prompt departure at 9.30am. For further information, contact John on 01543 686429.

Fire service cutbacks a disgrace, claims MP

FIRE service bosses in Staffordshire have been branded 'a disgrace' for scrapping fire engines and putting residents' safety at risk. The accusation was made in the Commons by Lichfield MP Michael Fabricant, who said he had 'lost confidence' in the service, advocating it should merge with Staffordshire Police. He criticised the authority for spending millions of pounds on a new fire station in Lichfield while axing the number of fire engines there. The authority has called his comments 'unfair and ill-informed'. The idea for combining the two bodies has come from Matthew Ellis, Staffordshire's Police and Crime Commissioner. Mr Fabricant asked Local Government Secretary Greg Clark to work with Mr Ellis, who had 'good, positive plans' to combine the police and fire services.

Mr Clark said he intended to remove the barriers that have prevented the kind of collaboration proposed. Councillor Len Bloomer, chairman of the Fire and Rescue Authority (FRA), said Staffordshire was one of the best performing services in the country. He said: "The comments made by Mr Fabricant are ill-informed, unfair and fail to recognise the significant achievements of both the service and the FRA." A recommendation that a group of senior fire authority officers should fully explore the benefits and risks of integration and collaboration was agreed at a meeting in December.

Bus passengers facing changes

ARRIVA Midlands is set to introduce a number of changes to bus services in the Cannock Chase district. The number 1 will be reverting to its original route from Huntington's Dog in Tree estate to Walsall via Cannock, Bridgtown, Great Wyrley and Bloxwich. Service 2 from Cannock to Walsall will divert to serve Turnberry Road, Broad Lane, Bell Lane, The Green, Wolverhampton Road as well as Somerfield Road and Leamore Lane in Bloxwich.

Arriva is also revising service 3 in Norton Canes, the number 24 between Rugeley and Brereton and the number 26 between from Rugeley to Etching Hill. The changes will start on January 3. Further details are available at www.arrivabus.co.uk

Log on to find out about flu vaccine

STAFFORDSHIRE residents who are eligible for the flu jab are being urged to consider getting the vaccination. Anyone who wants to find out if they are eligible for the free vaccine should visit staffordshirecares.info/flu

Glenn's men get vote with Deep devotion



Glenn Hughes in his Deep Purple days

DEEP Purple, whose past members include Cannock bassist Glenn Hughes, are among the acts chosen to join the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame next year. The heavy rock pioneers, famed for the track Smoke on the Water, have been inducted along with Chicago, Cheap Trick, ground-breaking rap group N.W.A. and Steve Miller. All five acts were chosen by more than 800 voters of the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame Foundation, as well as thousands of fans, and the ceremony will take place in Brooklyn, New

York, on April 8. Artists are eligible for inclusion 25 years after the release of their first recording. Deep Purple first landed in the charts in 1968 with their cover of Joe South's Hush. Fourteen members have come and gone since, including Hughes, who joined the band in 1973 to replace Roger Glover. As well as playing bass, Hughes was installed as co-lead vocalist with David Coverdale until the band's initial split three years later. Neither ever returned, with the original line-up reforming in 1984, and the group's only constant is

drummer Ian Paice. The members to be enshrined will include Hughes and Coverdale though, along with Paice, Ritchie Blackmore, Rod Evans, Ian Gillan, Roger Glover and Jon Lord, according to Rolling Stone magazine. Others who were nominated for the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame this time around include Janet Jackson, Nine Inch Nails and The Smiths but none of them made the cut. Neither did influential disco-era band Chic, who have now been nominated 10 times. The Cars, Los Lobos or Yes. It was the third nomination for Deep Purple.

CCTV probe ordered in wake of attack on Josh

A REVIEW of CCTV cameras in Cannock will take place after the devastating attack on Josh Morgan.

Cannock Chase Council leader George Adamson is to ask officers at the authority to look at whether more cameras are needed in the town centre. Josh was left brain damaged and immobile after being attacked by two amateur boxers in March 2014. James Robb, aged 23, and Alistair Douglas, 26, both of Cannock, were jailed over the attack but will serve only months behind bars. One of the problems prosecuting the case was a lack of evidence - notably CCTV footage. Councillor Adamson said: "If there are black-spots in town, then I want to see if we can get them covered. We don't want to see a repeat of this in Cannock. Cannock is a safe place to be but this was a sickening attack and it is important we do all we can to take steps so this cannot happen again." More than 4,000 people have signed an on-line petition calling on Robb and Douglas to face longer prison sentences. Judge Jonathan Gosling sentenced Robb, of Langdale Green, to three years in jail and Douglas, of Longford Road, to 27 months.

Evidence

But they will be freed after two to nine months because of the practice where prisoners serve only half of their sentence behind bars and a further reduction because of the time they spent electronically tagged. Prosecutors say they could bring only a lesser charge of inflicting grievous bodily harm because medical evidence could prove only one punch - despite Robb admitting to hitting the 20-year-old twice. It meant the maximum prison sentence on offer was five years. The pair then dragged Josh's unconscious body across the Backcroft car park before being spotted by a passer-by. The Chronicle's sister paper the Express & Star has launched a Justice for Josh campaign. Cannock Chase MP Amanda Milling is to raise the case with Justice Secretary Michael Gove. Josh was hit was such force that he was unable to break his fall and hit his head on the ground. He fractured his skull, suffered swelling and bleeding to the brain. He can communicate only with his eyes, limited arm movements, and has started to try to pronounce single words. The sentences have sparked outrage in Cannock. To support the campaign, go to www.change.org

Drivers to help isolated patients



From left, Clarins consultant Becky Harley, pharmacist Sindy Parkash, Co-op team leader Liz Birch,

CO-OPERATIVE Healthcare has launched an initiative to support elderly or isolated patients in Cannock this winter. The scheme will see its prescription delivery drivers receive training to help them identify signs of possible vulnerability and help people to get the care they need. Community Friends involves all 45 drivers with Co-operative Healthcare and The Midcounties Co-operative Pharmacy learn

about some of the tell-tale signs. These include instances where patients appear to be confused or agitated, have an unkempt appearance, or are in an unusually cold home. The drivers will then report any concerns to the pharmacy manager to follow up with the patient and direct them to organisations that can help. As part of their training, the drivers will also become accredited Dementia Friends, helping

them to understand the signs of conditions such as Alzheimer's, as well as becoming a Winter Friend, with a responsibility for sharing tips on keeping warm and saving energy during colder weather. Co-operative Healthcare superintendent pharmacist Abs Bashir said: "For many of our more vulnerable and isolated patients, visits from our delivery drivers are one of the few instances of human interaction they have."

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Cloudy2Clear Windows – Service With A Smile!

It's been a crazy few months for Cloudy2Clear Windows. The company which specialises in repairing windows which are steamed up, broken or damaged by replacing the panes – not the frames has grown rapidly as homeowners take advantage of their services. Managing Director Brian Stanley feels that it's all about service. "Our product is simple. If your double glazing is misted up we can replace the glass at a fraction of the cost of a new window, in any type of frame, and with a new 5 year guarantee. But it's not just about saving people

money, although that obviously helps. Many tradespeople have struggled since last year and I honestly feel that during the good times a minority perhaps didn't focus on customer care as much as they should have done. We make sure we turn up when we say we will, do the job the customer requires and leave their house as clean as a whistle. I often get comments back from customers on how they really didn't expect that sort of service which, in a way, is very sad for the service industry as a whole." Cloudy2Clear service Wolverhampton and the surrounding

area and Brian is finding that his approach is a major factor in his success. "The truth is that it's not just the personal satisfaction that I get from doing a good job but also it makes good business sense. I get a huge amount of business from friends and family of people



I've done work for, which just goes to show how much a little bit of effort is appreciated." So, if your windows are steamed up, broken or damaged give Brian a call for a free quotation on 0800 61 21 118 and he'll be happy to help!

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews



Apprentice throws up boastful candidates

A REPORT this week claimed 90 per cent of Britain's hospitals were understaffed because they are struggling to recruit enough nurses.

The survey comes a month after David Loughton, chief executive of the Royal Wolverhampton Hospitals NHS Trust, said the biggest threat to the future of the NHS was not a lack of money, but a shortage of suitably trained staff.

In years gone by, the solution would have been in Mr Loughton's hands as in the past, hospitals ran their own training schools where new recruits were taught their skills.

That is now but a memory, after somebody had the bright idea that all new nurses have to go through university before they are deemed ready to perform full nursing duties, with two in three applicants being turned down because there are not enough places.

Presumably, that is what the former Prime Minister meant by education, education, education. A great way to meet a political target of getting 50 per cent of all young people into university, but a lousy way of running a health service.

■■■■

ABOUT a month ago, I took a long weekend in Lanzarote to enjoy a bit of winter sunshine. It was only a three-night stay, but even so, I needed a decent-sized suitcase and a flight bag as well.

So how come the candidates on The Apprentice, who are signing up to 12 weeks living in the same house, each takes with them only a dainty little suitcase – on wheels, of course – to last them the duration of the series?

Despite finding space for the manicure sets and hair straighteners which they all seem to find obligatory, they manage to have all their belongings neatly packed up ready for each time they find themselves in the boardroom. My business plan would be for those special suitcases which are bigger inside than out.

■■■■

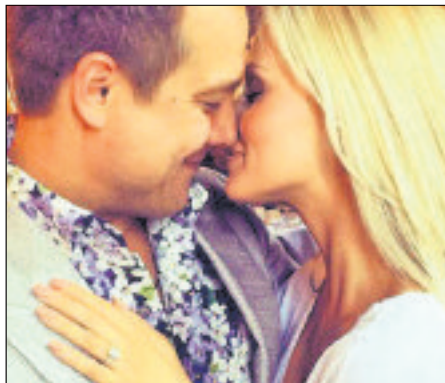
BUT wasn't it nice to see The Apprentice won by a lad with a touch of humility, and a desire to learn?

The series has produced its fair share of braggarts and bigmouths over the years. There has been Philip "Pantsman" Taylor who declared himself the Elvis Presley of business, and the ever-loveable Katie Hopkins who has made a career out of spewing her bile on Twitter. This series it was Richard Hill, the David Brent sound-alike who branded himself as "the Swiss army knife of business". Few people would have argued he was a bit of a tool.

And what do all these sneering, leering, "big characters" have in common? Not one of them has won. The moral is, if you want to make boastful, over-blown claims on your audition tape, you might indeed win a place in the series. But don't be surprised to be 'fired' once you have served your entertainment value.



Angus Mitchell, one-time playboy and a skilled hairdresser



Perfect couple? – how they were portrayed in the public eye



Blonde beauty – Sian is now barred from leaving California

The model, billionaire and the custody fight

ROB GOLLEDGE looks at one Staffordshire family's fight for custody which could be straight out of a US soap opera

IT WAS the fairytale marriage of a girl from a Staffordshire village and a Hollywood tycoon.

But now model Sian Mitchell and her husband Angus, the heir to the one billion dollar Paul Mitchell beauty empire, are in a bitter legal battle over their divorce and the custody of their son.

Sian, from Great Wyrley married Mr Mitchell last year and gave birth to Dylan seven months ago. But 19 days later, divorce proceedings were taken against Mrs Mitchell.

She has been banned from leaving California with her baby by the US courts, meaning she is trapped in the West Coast state.

Mrs Mitchell's grandmother Pauline Morgan has said that she has had to 'pay the price for falling in love'. Mrs Morgan, from Love Lane, said she has not seen her granddaughter for 15 months. "All Sian wants to do is to come to the UK for a holiday, yet these legal battles are forbidding her to leave," she said.

Flown

"It has all happened so quickly, we are all in shock. They seemed incredibly happy together and even were due to have a separate marriage over here in November. They seemed perfect together. He would even call me Nan," she added. "It's heartbreaking. She's paying the price for falling in love."

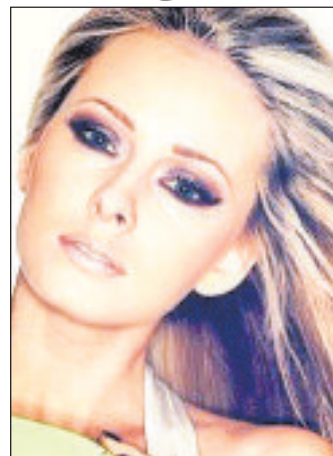
Because of the ban, Mrs Mitchell's family are yet to meet the new arrival. Her mother Debra has flown out to be with her.

The case has been raised for the first time by South Staffordshire MP Gavin Williamson. He has delivered a petition of 154 family and friends of Mrs Mitchell calling on the British Government to do all it can to assist her.

Mr Williamson told the Commons: "My constituent Sian Mitchell moved to the United States last year, following her engagement



All smiles together, but now there is a bitter battle, with millions of dollars at stake



Sian met Angus while modelling in the US

and marriage to an American citizen. Sadly, shortly after the birth of her son earlier this year, her marriage fell apart.

Her multi-millionaire husband, Mr Angus Mitchell, has taken out court orders preventing Sian from taking her child out of the State of California until proceedings have been resolved, making it as difficult as possible for her to bring up her son in the way she wishes.

"Sian is away from her family and relies on their emotional support during this extremely difficult time. She is desperate to return home to the United Kingdom with her child to allow her family to have the chance to meet this little boy for the first time."

Mrs Mitchell grew up in Great Wyrley where she was known as Sian Morgan. She went to school in Brewwood and was a member of the girl band ICandy which made it through to the X Factor boot camp in 2010. She was also

named Miss Coventry in the same year. She is now in her mid-20s.

Mr Mitchell, 45, was born into the legacy of late legendary hairstylist Paul Mitchell. He was educated by Vidal Sassoon stylists and started to craft his own signature style. He travels the world for hair events on behalf of Paul Mitchell. He lives in Los Angeles.

It is believed he met Mrs Mitchell while she was modelling in the States.

The Paul Mitchell luxury hair brand is reportedly worth more than 1 billion dollars per year. Paul Mitchell was born in Carnwath, Scotland, in 1936, but was initially called Cyril. He went on to become a nationally-renowned hairdresser and moved to New York in 1960 after being invited by Vidal Sassoon and his empire was born. He died in 1989 aged 53.

His son Angus now runs the business with his father's original business partner John

Paul DeJoria. The petition delivered to the Commons states: "The petitioners believe that the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government should offer as much support and assistance to her as possible so she can return to the UK. The petitioners therefore request that the House of Commons urges the Foreign and Commonwealth Office and the Government to make representations to the US Government and the State of California to press the issue and get a resolution to the problem at the earliest possible stage."

Mr Williamson added: "This is an incredibly sad case and I have asked the Government to do all it can in offering consular advice to Mrs Mitchell and her family. Her family in Great Wyrley are desperate to meet the baby for the first time and concerned for Mrs Mitchell who is after all, a young woman caught up in legal proceedings in a foreign country."



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Super force 'would be a help in crime battle'

Prize goes to caring Carl



Cannock Shopping Centre's centre manager Natal Chapman presents the prize to Carl Milakovic and his wife Slavica Milakovic

CANNOCK Shopping Centre has chosen Carl Milakovic as the winner of its Unsung Hero competition.

Carl, age 52, of Cannock, was nominated for the award by local woman Slavica Onions for all the work he does in the community, including acting as the local lollipop man as well as offering free sewing classes within his own home.

He also cares for his two disabled adult children as well as helping with childcare for his daughter who has four children and works part-time. Slavica described Carl as

'a man that would help anyone in need and kind-hearted to everyone he meets'. Carl, who was awarded his prize of a Kindle, board games for all the family and chocolates, said: "I cannot believe that I was nominated for this yet alone won."

"It came as a huge shock and I would like to thank Slavica for nominating me and of course the team at Cannock Shopping Centre for choosing me."

"I have never done any of this for recognition I just think it is important to help others where possible."

MORE criminals would be caught if West Midlands Police merged with Staffordshire and others to form a 'super force', retiring Chief Constable Chris Sims said.

Mr Sims, who will take up a national policing role after retiring as the second highest-ranking officer in the country, said resilience would be boosted by the merger and further savings could be made.

But he acknowledged there was not the 'political' support for the move. In his last interview as West Midlands Chief Constable, Mr Sims said: "You demolish borders, and borders are great for criminals at times. We work closely with colleagues in the region but that could be stronger."

"Having been Chief Constable in Staffordshire and then at West Midlands, I probably hoped we would be further down the track with the work we do with other regional forces."

"We still run motorway policing and more serious organised crime work together."

Option

"But if you asked me six or seven years ago, I would have thought there would be more convergence." Plans to merge West Midlands, Staffordshire, Warwickshire and West Mercia were mooted a decade ago when Mr Sims was Deputy Chief Constable at West Midlands. At the time he said £23 million would be saved a year allowing more officers to be recruited.

But after five years of government austerity, Mr Sims believes it is still the best option.

He said: "I think policing in the wider West Midlands region would be stronger if we worked together. I'm heartened that there is fresh impetus on that. I still think there are advantages to a single organisation but equally I recognise politically there is no interest in it, so we think we need to look at collaborating closer."

"There are things that could be done at a national level but in terms of policing there are efficiency and effectiveness arguments that have been there for a decade or more."



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Volunteers are vital to our work

MAY I take this opportunity to thank everyone who volunteered for the Alzheimer's Society over the past year and wish our past, present and future supporters a happy new year.

We had some great successes in 2015 including our ever-growing Memory Walk, which raised just over £113,000 in Cannock and the surrounding area – a fantastic achievement.

It is only with the support of individuals, local groups and companies who give up their time to volunteer with us that we can continue to provide support services for people living with dementia and their carers.

We are always eager to hear from anyone who would like to volunteer for us. To find out more about volunteering, call 01543 255983 or email Rachel.dean@alzheimers.org.uk

You can also see all our volunteering opportunities at www.alzheimers.org.uk

RACHEL DEAN
Volunteering Officer

Our own charities would grab offer of help

I ADMIRE those who give up their time and skill to do charitable humanitarian work but at times I wonder if it's directed in the right places.

An example is the podiatrists who are going to the aid of migrants in Calais who may have foot problems such as wounds as a result of their long journeys ("Fiona to set up clinic for refugees", December 17).

My first thought was the French have a large expansive health service, which is very efficient if what I've read

is true. They have doctors and hospitals who wouldn't and can't refuse such treatment for such wounds.

French charities and local people on the ground are also providing the migrants with many forms of assistance while they're in what the article describes as possibly the largest slum in Europe. If it is a slum, and it seems to be, it's a slum of their own making because for those who may be genuine refugees they should be seeking asylum in France. My point is that there are

a lot of homeless people and charities in the UK who would grab at the offer of free professional help from qualified individuals in all aspects of care. What about the Salvation Army for example.

I respect the right for groups and individuals to choose where they want to help but there are enough opportunities here in the UK.

Leave it to the French and do your good deeds here.

DAVID HOLLINGS
Burntwood

Church has drifted from message

HAYDN Greenway makes some interesting observations and expresses the real concern of an impending holy war which threatens the very foundation of Western civilization ("Religion has a contradictory nature", December 3).

I often wish I could separate true Christianity from the thing we call religion. Christianity, as seen and visualised by the general public, has become so deformed it is a wonder that God himself recognises it.

One reading of the New Testament is enough to demonstrate how far the Church has drifted from the basic truths of Christ's message for mankind.

There are some real saints in every Christian congregation throughout the world but the institutionalised main church denominations have drifted into too much pomp and ceremony with archaic church traditions taking the limelight.

FRANK BOHANAN
Rugeley

The first six months was like a whirlwind

A VERY busy year – the first half of 2015 was dominated by the general election and was then followed by what I can only describe as a whirlwind first six months in Parliament.

The latter half of the year has been especially busy for me here in the constituency – my workload did not ease off after the buzz of electioneering. From setting up my constituency office in Hednesford to tackling issues like overcrowding on the Chase Line, I have been kept very busy.

As always, if anyone needs any help from me, please pop into my Hednesford office or call me on 01543 877142 and I will do anything I can.

I would like to wish all readers a Happy New Year, and I look forward to the challenges and joys 2016 will bring us.

AMANDA MILLING
MP for Cannock Chase

Misty just loves to keep an eye on me

AFTER my second hip operation in early November my six-year-old black Staffie bitch Misty has insisted on following me up the stairs to bed each night – as she did after my first operation earlier this year – and sleeping on a pillow on the floor at the foot of my bed. If I get up in the night to go to the loo she lifts her head off the pillow as if to say: "I am here keeping an eye on you."

When I return she appears to be fast asleep but she doesn't fool me because I know she isn't due to the absence of loud snoring. Every morning just before I get up she makes her way painfully downstairs due to a damaged hip she suffered as a pup when falling down our steep stairs.

As soon as I don't need the help and assistance of my arm crutches, as in my first hip operation she will stop coming to bed with me and sleep in the kitchen downstairs. Needless to say she has a special place in my heart.

ROBERT WESTWORTH
Rugeley

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Cannock & Rugeley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

EMAIL

cannock.chron@expressandstar.co.uk

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

Wrong description of war

SHADOW foreign secretary Hilary Benn wrongly describes the civil war in Syria. Such a war would be between citizens of the same state. Terrorists, the feudal monarchies, Turkey and others have invaded Syria, with the intention of overthrowing a democratically elected government. Last month the third largest city Homs was liberated by the Syrian army. Soon they will seek to liberate Raqqa.

P BRYANT
Burntwood

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Poignant light up a life service

Friends of St Giles

THE 2015 Light up a Life service held by St Giles Hospice and its Cannock Friends' group was as well attended as ever.

People were greeted at St Luke's Church by Friends and by members of the Cannock Rotary and Scepticist clubs with orders of service and a candle to remember a loved one's life.

Singers Bel Canto who added their harmonies to the carols and performed two special items; these and the readings from Emma Hodges, CEO of St Giles Hospice and Trish Mellor of Cannock Friends, added to the atmosphere and mood.

The most poignant time was when the lights were turned off and the Christmas tree lights on, allowing for quiet and private thought and reflection.

During this time a Bel Canto soloist sang 'Sleep Holy Child' followed by the congregation joining in with Silent Night while the church lights were slowly reinstated.

Following the service, led by Rev Peter Hart, St Giles trustee Simon James spoke to the congregation and remembered particularly Helen Relihan, head of fundraising, who tragically died recently on a trek in Vietnam, raising funds for the hospice.

The book of Remembrance was available in the Lady Chapel and refreshments, provided by Cannock Friends were also available. A copy will be available in the Church Centre until the end of January. More than £600 was donated.

Annette is inducted as new club member

Cannock Ladies' Probuc Club

Pathway boosted by reindeer food

SI Cannock & District

MEMBERS of SI Cannock enjoyed a very festive afternoon at the Norton Canes Community Centre Christmas fair.

They chatted about why they love being part of SI Cannock and the work they do for charities, including local domestic violence charity The Pathways Project.

Members sold Magical Reindeer Food to support Pathway and raised a total of £45 to buy gifts for children who would spend Christmas in a domestic violence refuge.

Children who bought the Magical Reindeer Food were thrilled to be able to help children less fortunate than themselves as well as being excited at being able to provide such sustenance for Santa's reindeer!

Service work lies at the heart of the club's goals and they are committed to raising awareness of issues relevant to women and girls around the world - issues such as domestic violence, female genital mutilation, modern day slavery and the gynaecological condition endometriosis. They also raise funds when appropriate to educate, empower and enable women and girls.

More information about the club and the organisation is available at www.sigbi.org/midland-chase www.sigbi.org/cannock-and-district and at www.facebook.com/SICannock

CHAIRMAN Christine Pace welcomed everyone to the Christmas luncheon at the Barns restaurant and gave a special welcome to a new member Annette Bint, who was inducted into the club.

Grace was said by past chairman Joyce Baxter, after which the ladies enjoyed their lunch, together with a glass of wine, provided by the club.

Mrs Pace then introduced the guest entertainers, Alan and Christine Eccleshall who gave a lovely rendition of old Christmas folk songs, unaccompanied but in perfect harmony. The ladies all enjoyed these songs and were able to join in with "The Twelve Days of Christmas" which brought their programme to a very happy end.

Angela Reid gave the vote of thanks on behalf of the club and presented a donation to Alan and Chris which they said they would pass on to the "Contact In Christian Fellowship" in Moscow to help to feed and give shelter to the homeless there at Christmas.

The club meets on the last Thursday of each month at the Barns Restaurant where new members are always made welcome. Friendship and Fellowship over a splendid meal is the order of the day.

For membership enquiries call secretary Norma Hutchinson on 01543 505188.

Derek reveals Secret Garden

GARDENING was the topic for November for Etching Hill Members.

Derek Higgot visited the Institute to give an illustrated talk entitled 'All Things Bright & Beautiful'.

Derek has a good eye for things of beauty and illustrated his talk with slides of pictures he had taken in various gardens including his own 'Secret Garden' he opens to the public in Great Haywood. A few days later, members attended the Market Day

Etching Hill WI

meeting at the County Showground when Joe Swift, one of the presenters from Gardener's World, told the audience how he became interested in gardening which led him to garden design and appearances on various television programmes.

Members enjoyed a Christmas meal at Shugborough.

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Charity cash stolen in raids on same night

CHARITY money was stolen after two shops were broken into in Norton Canes on the same night.

A door was also damaged at Norton Canes High School and the alarms were set off. Police are saying all three could be linked. Crofts Bakery inn Burntwood Road and nearby Mr Snips hairdressers were targeted.

The intruders smashed the glass at the bottom of the front door to get into Crofts Bakery where they stole £30 of charity cash being collected for children with cerebral palsy.

Manager Julie Mason said: "I came in the following morning to see what had happened and to be honest I just thought it was disgusting. They have taken charity money for children and just made a mess."

"We have been here nearly nine years and never had any problems whatsoever. There was no need to make the mess that they did, it's just ridiculous. It is very unsettling, we are a small business and we are here to make a living. This is knock back."

Triggered

Charity money was stolen from Mr Snips nearby which was also left in a mess although no-one from the salon was available to comment.

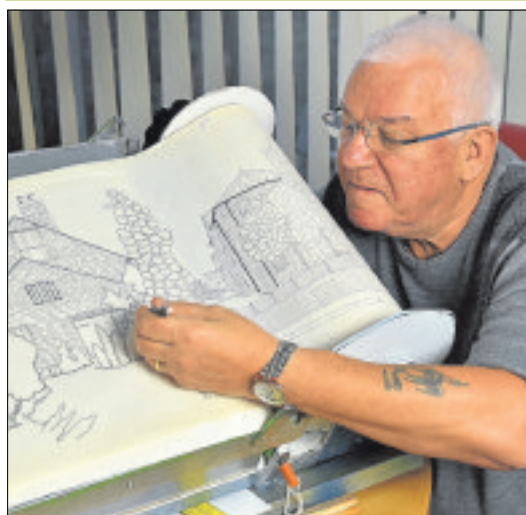
During the same night the alarm was triggered at Norton Canes High and damage was discovered to a door but nothing was reported stolen.

Staffordshire Police spokeswoman Jane Hoult said: "An investigation into the incidents is under way. Whether they are linked will form part of the investigation."

The break-ins happened overnight on December 9. Earlier last month, there were similar raids in Cannock where burglars broke into three businesses in four days.

A £15,000 haul of electrical goods was stolen from boots on the Orbital Retail Park while thieves took an empty safe from Sealine Fish Bar in High Green. A high-value drill was stolen from Fluid Technologies in Norton Canes which prompted bosses to invest £3,000 in improving security. Anyone with information on the latest incidents should contact police on 101.

Artist is back on a roll



Battling back - Maurice Ivor Birch with his drawings on the scroll

IT all began at a car boot sale in Cannock more than 40 years ago...

Now, having suffered a fifth stroke, talented artist Maurice Ivor Birch is sketching again. He thought he had drawn his final sketch after a summer attack when he lost all feeling in his right side.

But the 74-year-old self-taught artist was not going to let it get in the way of his passion.

Maurice has spent more than 40 years sketching historic buildings in his hometown of Aldridge onto a scroll he purchased at a car boot

sale in Cannock in 1969. A selection of that work made it into Aldridge On A Roll, a poetry and local history book released by Mapseekers Archived Publishing this autumn.

However, following publication, Maurice was hit by the series of strokes and was confined to his garden and conservatory in Aldridge with his wife Beryl. He said: "I really did think I couldn't carry on."

In recent weeks, Maurice has worked his strength up and is now back to his scroll, which he says acts as a historical record of his town.

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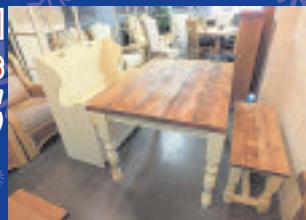
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Sneak peek at arboretum visitor centre



An artist's impression of the £15.7m visitor centre at the National Memorial Arboretum

THIS is what a new £15.7-million visitor centre will look like when building work is finished at the National Memorial Arboretum in Staffordshire.

The artist impression shows the vast size of the new attraction at the 150-acre site in Alrewas. It is due to open in autumn 2016.

The centre is expected to attract 500,000 visitors per year and will include a spacious welcome area and a large exhibition space dedicated to the interpretation of remembrance.

There will also be a new restaurant and separate café at the Remembrance Centre which will open out on to a cloistered outdoor space called Heroes' Square.

A landscaped garden will lead visitors into the wider arboretum which

is home to 30,000 maturing trees and has more than 300 memorials.

Sarah Montgomery, managing director of the arboretum, said: "The arboretum welcomes around 300,000 visitors each year, many of whom come as part of an organised group visit.

Significance

"The new Remembrance Centre will enable us to offer even more to our visitors and we are particularly excited about the planned exhibition area and audio guide which will really help people to understand the true significance of the arboretum."

She added just over £10m of the total £15.7m required had already been raised and the remainder would be made up from grants and further donations.

The arboretum is home to the iconic Armed Forces Memorial bearing the names of more than 16,000 Service

personnel who have been killed on duty since the end of the Second World War.

Planned events range from commemorations for important military anniversaries, such as Remembrance Sunday, Armistice Day and Armed Forces Day, to an outdoor cinema offer in the summer, and Christmas-themed events including gift fairs and a candlelit carol service.

There are also regular guided walks and buggy tours around the memorials and grounds and a daily Act of Remembrance in the Millennium Chapel.

Events and activities at the Arboretum will continue as normal while work is carried out on the new Remembrance Centre and visitors can view all the memorials apart from the Armed Forces Memorial, which is closed until autumn 2016.

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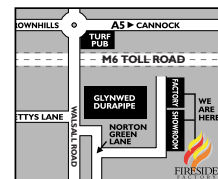


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Tables are turned on soup kitchen helpers



From left, Mick Jones, Dave Harris and Jordan Money give a firmman's lift to Sarah Rose from Tesco

STAFFORDSHIRE Fire and Rescue Service teamed up with Tesco and a Rugeley church to bring some Christmas cheer to a group of hardworking volunteers.

The volunteers from Rugeley's Soup Kitchen have provided heart-warming food and a vital social lifeline to vulnerable members of the community for almost 30 years.

Firefighters, Tesco staff and members of the congregation at St Joseph's Catholic Church turned the tables on the volunteers and served up a traditional festive meal to them to say thank you.

Activities included bingo and Play Your Cards Right and traditional carols were sung by pupils from Chancel Primary School Choir in Rugeley. Santa presented the prizes to the competition winners.

Community Safety Officer Mark Downes said: "The meal was a way of the community giving back to the volunteers who have served it so tirelessly over the years."

"I would like to thank everyone who helped to make the day such a great success, from the companies and individuals who donated items, to all the volunteers from St Joseph's Catholic Church and staff from Tesco who gave their time to ensure the day was enjoyed by everyone."

Boss warns of difficult decisions on cutbacks

MAKING budget cuts will become 'harder and harder' for Staffordshire County Council over the next five years, according to the authority's deputy leader.

Councillors at a cabinet meeting discussed the work already done to reduce costs. The council has already reduced costs by £150 million since 2010.

It must now set out spending priorities across departments to balance the books by 2020. Councillor Ian Parry, the council's deputy leader and cabinet member responsible for finance, said funding the care of the elderly, the disabled and children in care would continue to be priorities.

He added: "When you have already reduced costs by £150 million, then decisions do become harder and harder." The council has yet to receive full details of government funding, but is considering a 1.95 per cent rise in council tax. However, the Labour group on the council called for Tory members to be made accountable and explain their decisions.

A statement from the group said the proposed 1.95 per cent council tax

increase was 'just 0.05 per cent under the two per cent threshold which would legally require the council to hold a referendum'.

The statement added that Staffordshire residents would be dealt an extra blow by 'cutting county services, such as crossing patrols, bus subsidies and health services for young families'.

The group's deputy leader Councillor Sue Woodward, who represents Burntwood North, said: "Schools' crossing wardens are invaluable for keeping children and their families safe."

The final budget proposals will be scrutinised by the corporate review committee before being agreed by the full council in February.

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Norton Canes

Methodist Church Hall
Poplar Street, Norton Canes
6.30pm

Ring Lesley Anne: 07966 456412

Rugeley

Rugeley Rose Theatre
Taylors Lane, Rugeley
5.30pm & 7.30pm

Ring Rachel: 07807 785600

Heath Hayes

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Wimblebury Road,
Heath Hayes
7.00 pm

Ring Lisa: 07723 606393

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Ring Kierston: 07824665600

Cannock

Littleton Green Community
School, Stafford Road,
Cannock 7pm

Ring Rose: 07837 088159

Brereton

Cedar Tree Hotel,
110 Main Road,
Brereton, Rugeley
3.30pm & 5.30pm & 7.30pm

Ring Emma: 07969 865624

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Bethel Methodist Church
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Cannock 5.30pm

Ring Gill: 07958 000554

Hednesford

Pye Green Community Centre
Bradbury Lane, Pye Green
9.30am ***Morning group***

Ring Rose: 07837 088159

Heath Hayes

Welcome Club, Hednesford
Road, Heath Hayes
5.30pm & 7.30pm

Ring Kerrie: 07708 477577

Chadsmoor

NEW VENUE

Bethany Baptist Church,
Cannock Road, Chadsmoor
7.30pm

Ring Lesley-Anne: 07966 456412

THURSDAY

Cannock

Avon Business & Leisure
Centre The Chase Suite Avon
Road, Cannock (next to Asda)
6.30pm

Ring Jan: 07939 001558

Cheslyn Hay

Cheslyn Hay Community &
Sports Club

26 Station Street, Cheslyn
Hay

9.30am * Morning Group *
also at 5.30pm & 7.30pm

Ring Julie: 07792 762144

Hednesford

Aquarius Ballroom
Victoria Street,
Hednesford, Cannock
3.30 & 5.30pm & 7.30pm

Ring Gill: 07958 000554

Rugeley

Mansfield House (next to
Aldi), Market Street, Rugeley
9.30am & 11.30am

Morning Groups

Ring Rachel: 07807 785600

Chasetown

Chasetown Methodist
Church, Lawnswood Avenue,
Chasetown

9.30am & 7.30pm

Ring Rachel: 07889 882086

Rugeley

NEW VENUE

Mansfield House (next to Aldi)
40 Market Street, Rugeley

7.00pm

Ring Liz: 07721 697140

FRIDAY

Burntwood

NEW GROUP

1st Chase Scout Group
Ironstone Road, Burntwood

9.30am *Morning Group*

Ring Liz: 07721 697140

Hednesford

NEW DAY GROUP

Aquarius Ballroom
Victoria Street, Hednesford

9.30am *Morning Group*

Ring Gill: 07958 000554

SATURDAY

Cannock

St Lukes Church Hall
Church Street, Cannock

10am ***Morning Group***

Ring Fina: 07530 165049

Burntwood

1st Chase Terrace
Scout Group,
Ironstone Road, Burntwood

8.00am & 10.00am

Morning Groups

Ring Liz: 07721 697140

Pye Green

NEW VENUE

Pye Green Community Centre
Bradbury Lane, Pye Green

10.00am *Morning Group*

Ring Fina: 07530 165049



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Pictures plea over park

AN appeal has been launched to find old photographs of an award-winning park in Stafford – to help visualise a £2.5 million improvement scheme. Stafford Borough Council wants to gather together a collection of pictures of Victoria Park to find out more about how the 100-year-old attraction used to look. The pictures from years gone by will be used as part of a consultation with residents, businesses and visitors to draw up restoration plans for the historical section of the park. Victoria Park has been awarded Green Flag status for the past eight years.

Chase not for sale, MP tells Commons

CANNOCK Chase is not for sale, local MP Amanda Milling told the Commons. But she says she wants the public to have more of a say in how the beauty spot is managed.

The MP for Cannock Chase was speaking in a debate on ancient woodland. A county council consultation is looking into the management of its countryside estate including parts of the Chase.

Ms Milling said: "Cannock Chase is not for sale but the council is looking how best it can manage the site."

"While they recognise that the current ownership and management of Cannock Chase is seen to be the most appropriate option, there are other management set-ups the public can voice their opinion on. I would encourage them to take part in the consultation to ensure their voice is heard."

The county council has stated that its preferred management option for Cannock Chase is the current set-up but wants to know what the public think.



Cannock Chase

Lucky

Ancient woodland in England and Wales is defined as an area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600AD.

Shortly before the debate, Ms Milling went on a tour of the Chase with the team from Cannock Chase AONB.

She said: "We are incredibly lucky to have the Chase on our doorstep."

"It is a beautiful landscape and there are lots of activities on offer for visitors and locals to enjoy. Whilst I am keen to encourage people to make the most of having this wonderful natural environment on their doorstep, it is also important that we do so in

a responsible way. We need to protect and conserve the Chase which was designated an AONB in 1958 because of its beautiful landscape, wildlife and history.

"There are some simple measures we can take – for instance, parking at the designated parking areas, sticking to the trails and paths that are signposted and also washing boots to avoid plant and tree diseases being transmitted."

"We need to ensure that the Chase is preserved for generations to come." Anyone wanting to take part in the consultation can call 0300 111 8000, email countrysideestatestaterewiew@staffordshire.gov.uk or visit www.staffordshire.gov.uk/yourcouncil/consultationandfeedback/consultation-and-feedback.aspx until January 24.

Project points way to develop green spaces

RESIDENTS are being given the opportunity to take ownership of, and use and improve, their local green spaces for 'positive' activities.

As part of the Green Doorsteps project, they will also be encouraged to develop their skills, knowledge and capabilities as a community.

The scheme, delivered by Groundwork West Midlands, will support groups in their efforts to develop, and access further funding.

Green Doorsteps has three main elements – a review of neighbourhood green space; development of taster activities which will inform monthly activity

sessions; and creation of an improvement plan and associated activity.

Working in Lichfield and Burton upon Trent, organisers will help residents to identify the local green spaces available to them, how they are currently used and help them to realise their potential.

Activities to be delivered will include food growing, physical or sensory activities, and practical conservation or management.

Anyone with project ideas or who would like further information can contact Richard Schneider by emailing Richard.Schneider@groundwork.org.uk



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Museum helps with submarine exhibition

The Museum of Cannock Chase has helped colleagues in Plymouth share the fascinating story of the Thetis submarine.

Lee Bellingham, manager at the museum, was on holiday when she read in the local newspaper that the Davenport Naval Heritage Centre was planning an exhibition about the submarine, which was lost in 1939 during

sea trials with the loss of many lives. She said: "Cannock Chase has a link to the story as the Hednesford Mines Rescue Station sent a rescue team wearing Proto breathing apparatus to remove bodies from the submarine."

"We shared this with the heritage centre and provided copies of letters, photos and information relating to the event to be used in the display."

Michael Burt, at the Davenport Naval Heritage Centre, said: "The contribution to the display was priceless."

"We are going to keep the display board on show at the centre as a permanent memorial." A Proto breathing apparatus is on display at the Museum of Cannock Chase, in Hednesford. Email museumofcannockchase@wlct.org or call 01543 877666 for details.

Council delighted as £115m outlet village can now go ahead

A £115 MILLION designer outlet village in Cannock is a step closer after the Secretary of State decided not to stand in the way.

Planning bosses at Cannock Chase Council approved the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village proposals at the end of November.

The scheme was then passed up to the Secretary of State, who has decided not to 'call in' the planning application, which has given the council the green light to proceed with approval in the new year, subject to the completion of various agreements.

Leader of the council George Adamson said: "I am delighted that the Secretary of State has decided to support the local decision to grant consent for the Mill Green Designer Outlet Village. This is the best news that this district has received for many years, and I look forward to the opening of the first phase during 2018."

Councillor Gordon Alcott, portfolio leader for economic development and planning, said: "It is great news that this has been agreed at national level and can now proceed. Mill Green Designer Outlet Village will attract three million new visitors to Cannock Chase and Staffordshire when it is open, which will be a huge boost for the district."

Specialist

And the council's managing director Tony McGovern said: "I am pleased that the Secretary of State has agreed that this proposal can now go forward. It will deliver a huge number of construction and retail jobs and bring significant improvements to the local transport network."

"I would like to thank everybody who has supported this proposal to date."

The planning application was submitted in February this year by development partners U+I (formerly Development Securities) and Rioja Developments.

The Mill Green proposal for a specialist designer outlet retail units, restaurants, a play area and a visitor centre and at 23,758 sq m will be the biggest development of its kind in the West Midlands region.

The first phase of the development could be open during 2018.

Cannock Chase MP Amanda Milling said: "I am absolutely delighted that the Mill Green development can proceed without any delays or hold-ups."

"This development will place Cannock firmly on the nation's retail map."

"The development means big luxury brand names will set up shop in Cannock, as well as unlocking road, rail and town centre investment. There will also be a new retail training academy open at South Staffordshire College. It's also great news for the local jobs market."

"There will be ongoing retail employment onsite and more jobs in the wider supply chain, as well as new construction jobs while the development is built. This is a real boost for Cannock Chase."

Cathedral's gift of lights



Hundreds of people watched the cathedral show Picture: Will Fuller

IT was 'a gift from Lichfield Cathedral to the city' that illuminated the night sky with a festive glow.

Stunning projections of Santa Claus, snowmen and holy figures lit up the front of Lichfield Cathedral during the 'A Cathedral Illuminated' Christmas show.

The 40-minute spectacular, combining the work of Peter Walker, artist in residence at the cathedral, and composer David Harper, attracted huge crowds. The pair, who collaborate under the name Luxmaralis, impressed people of all ages with a show that captured the traditional spirit of Christmas using cutting edge technology.

Simon Warburton, operations manager at Lichfield Cathedral, said: "Our aim is to engage with as

many people as we can using a wide variety of mediums. This is especially important at Christmas, when we believe that a cathedral should really become a meeting place for people and families who want to enjoy themselves together."

"We had runners who had no idea of the show we were putting on coming down because they had seen the lights from far away, it was the same with families out in their cars." The display was the culmination of more than a month's work by Mr Walker and Mr Harper, who crafted their unique original pieces from scratch specially for the show.

Mr Walker added: "I think Mr Walker summed it up best himself when he said it was a gift from Lichfield Cathedral to the city."

Panto fun with a modern twist

Cinderella, Prince of Wales Centre, Cannock

CINDERELLA is one of the nation's most popular and much loved pantomimes but would this year's Christmas production in Cannock live up to expectations?

I love pantos and I have seen a host of performances – and this one didn't disappoint. I visited with my parents and my brother for the opening day matinee. The first half was very traditional but there was a twist after the interval as the panto went modern.

Children, including myself, loved getting on our feet to songs including Bruno Mars' Uptown Funk, while

REVIEW

By Isaac Turner

singing along to Michael Jackson's Thriller and Beat It was great fun.

The panto was very interactive and all the time we were on our feet and dancing and singing. The atmosphere was fun and upbeat. The 12 days of Christmas with a funny take was great fun and performed very entertainingly by regular Prince of Wales panto theatre favourite Keith De Winter, who played The Ugly Sister Conchita.

The dancers from Rugeley's Studio

5 Academy Of Dance were brilliant. The standard of singing was very good. Cinderella played by Naomi Gisbey and Sam Pope who played Prince Charming were exceptionally good.

The children enjoyed hissing and booing at Lady Morticia Tremayne played by Helen Peters who was great in her role of a baddie.

The panto catered for children of all ages. There was the wiggly worm for the little ones and some children got to go on stage to perform it. But there were jokes for older children as well. For me, this performance of Cinderella was the best yet and I am already looking forward to next year's production.

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The volunteers who completed the three-month course with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service

A GROUP of young people have graduated from a Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service-led Prince's Trust programme.

The group of 12 young people aged between 16 and 25 and one HMRC volunteer participant have achieved The Prince's Trust Certificate after taking part in the charity's 'Team' programme.

They were presented with their certificates by Chief Fire Officer Peter Dartford and Prince's Trust executive Paul Edwards during a ceremony held at the Gatehouse Theatre, Stafford.

During the course the participants completed a residential programme

and four fundraising challenges which included two supermarket bag packs and a triathlon and a penalty shoot-out at Stafford College.

Participants also took part in a community project, a two-week work placement programme and a team challenge.

Team leader Joyce Underwood said: "We are incredibly proud of what the young people have achieved over the last 12 weeks."

"They have completed a community project which involved clearing waste ground for the community in association with Stafford and Rural Homes, as well as taking part in fundraising

activities. They embarked upon all the challenges and activities undertaken with enthusiasm and commitment.

"It has been a real privilege to watch them blossom over the weeks as they developed new skills and grew in confidence. I would like to congratulate them all."

The next Prince's Trust Team programme starts on February 1.

For more information email princes.trust@staffordshirefire.gov.uk or ring or text Joyce Underwood on 07971 89353.

Further information is also available online at www.staffordshirefire.gov.uk/princes-trust.asp

Sports tourism gives county £200m boost

MORE than £200 million a year could be generated in Staffordshire alone through the fast-growing sports tourism industry, a new report says.

The county is bidding to host The Great Swim for the first time and also hopes to win another contract to stage the UK Corporate Games which this year, together with the Ironman race, attracted a total 16,000 visitors and generated £5.4m.

A recent study by Sport England into the economic value of sport at a national and county level estimated it could be worth £212.6 million a year in Staffordshire.

More than 5,000 people are already employed by sport in the county – but the number of sports businesses is below average compared to neighbouring West Midlands and the rest of the UK. Between 2008 and 2011 there were only 10 new sports-related companies that folded was high. Figures show that while nationally the number of sport businesses increased after 2011, the figures in Staffordshire have declined.



The 2015 Ironman competition

County bosses are determined to turn this around and build on the success of the Ironman event at Shugborough and Chasewater this year.

Money also comes in from people visiting the county and spending money on leisure, such as hotels and

restaurants. A 'Sportshire' strategy, with its own dedicated co-ordinator, was launched in 2013 to raise the county's sports tourism profile.

The council is looking to build on the popularity of Cannock Chase which attracts more than 2.3 million walkers, cyclists and horse-riders a year.

It is now planned to give Staffordshire a more specific sporting identity.

The authority has recently spent £6m in revamping Chase Leisure Centre in Cannock and a sporting investment programme for the next eight years is currently being developed.

The county also boasts St George's Park, the £105m base for England's 24 national football teams, and JCB has announced plans for a £30m golf course near its Rocester headquarters.

County councillor Mark Wingington, cabinet member for economy, said: "Last year's Corporate Games were a huge success and generated over £3m while showcasing the county to hundreds of top UK companies. Ironman attracted over 2,000 competitors to the county and if hosted the Great Swim could also help attract thousands of visitors to the area."

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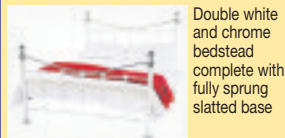
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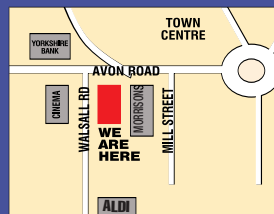
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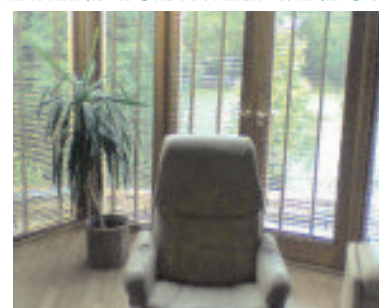
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FOCUS ON PENKRIDGE

Plans for new housing and jobs are under spotlight

PUPILS in South Staffordshire who entered a writing competition have had their work included in two newly published books.

Organised by Children Matter, a project by Age UK South Staffordshire and funded by the BIG Lottery, the competition was held in the summer.

Now, the shortlisted entries have been turned into two books, split into Key Stage 1 and 2, consisting of stories, poems and recipes.

The 400 entries, from 14 schools, were judged by well-known authors Anne Fine and Linda Chapman.

Ellie Brown, aged six, won the Key Stage 1 prize, and Jacob Green, nine, the Key Stage 2 prize.

The books were presented to teachers and pupils at Princefield School in Penkridge and then circulated to all the other shortlisted children and schools.

Centre marks its first year

AN activities centre at Gailley celebrated its first birthday after a loss of funding for a special school prompted staff and volunteers to run it themselves.

Kids Adventurous Activities, based at South Staffordshire Sailing Club, was previously run through Westcroft Sport and Applied Learning College.

Email gailleylake@gmail.com for more details.

RESIDENTS in South Staffordshire have the chance to comment on council plans for housing and employment in the district.

South Staffordshire Council has launched an eight-week consultation into proposed sites for employment, market housing and affordable homes, as well as gipsy and traveller pitches. The consultation runs until midday on Friday, February 12.

The move follows a year of discussions with local people, during which they were asked their opinion on the best sites for housing, employment and traveller pitches. Now, the council has identified which sites they have earmarked for development, and are again asking local people what they think of the plans.

The consultation forms part of South Staffordshire Council's Site Allocations process. With the local population growing and more people living longer, the council says more housing is needed.

There is also a need to increase employment in the district by attracting more large firms, and to meet the needs of the gipsy and traveller communities.

The sites under review have been narrowed down from a larger group of sites.

By David Banner

There are sites in Billbrook, Brewood, Cheslyn Hay, Cod-sall, Great Wyrley, Kinver, Perton and Wombourne.

A site in Penkridge for more 300 houses already has planning permission. There are also smaller sites in Coven, Featherstone, Pattingham Swindon and Wheaton Aston.

Exhibitions are being held in each locality, where planning officers will be available to discuss the proposals.

The venues include Hal-gine Dene Centre, Penkridge, on Thursday, January 7, and Cheslyn Hay Village Hall on January 28 as well as Brewood, Wombourne and Cod-sall. All of the exhibitions run from 2pm to 7pm. People can also call 01902 696593 or email sad-consultation@sstaffs.gov.uk

Double celebration for beauty clinic



Becky Stevens, Pam Smith and partners Ad Brachmanski, left, and Doug Smith, right

A NEW beauty clinic is in heaven as it marked its first anniversary with a top prize.

The Chase Caci Clinic, at Pil-laton Hall Farm near Penkridge, followed up its first-year celebrations with a Best Newcomer accolade at the 'Heaven by Deborah Mitchell' 20th Anniversary awards evening. The clinic, run by Pam Smith, held a party to mark its 12-month milestone.

Days later came the awards ceremony at the Genting Hotel at the NEC.

The Best Newcomer title was awarded in recognition of the innovative use of 'Heaven' skincare products - founded by Deborah Mitchell - in conjunction with the Caci machines and other equipment. Caci - Computer Aided Cosmetology Instrument - is a cosmetic surgery known as a non-surgical facelift.

Pam attended the ceremony with husband Doug, colleague Becky Stevens and her partner Ad Brachmanski. Pam said: "We have had a wonderful first year and are looking forward to providing more treatments and services to our clients in 2016."

Champion scheme's £1,000 for responders

PENKRIDGE & District Community First Responders (CFRS) has been given £1,000 by a local building firm.

The charity, which helps provide first response medical attention in rural areas, applied to Persimmon Homes West Midlands to become one of its monthly Community Champions.

The money will go towards essential car and liability insurances.

Mike Tym, spokesman for CFRS, said: "Our volunteers drop everything to provide emergency care within their community immediately after a heart attack or life-threatening situation before any ambulances arrive. Our volunteers regularly use CPR and defibrillators and the sooner resuscitation is available or a stroke identified the greater the chances of recovery."

Tim Brickley, director in charge of Persimmon Homes West Midlands, said: "The work of the community first responders is vital. It was an easy decision to support them in their work."

Victoria Tufail, West Midlands Ambulance Service community response manager for Staffordshire said: "This is great news and will undoubtedly help Penkridge and District CFRs continue to provide an excellent service."

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CD REVIEWS

by Danny Farragher

Sunjay Black & Blues
SUNJAY, he now prefers just his first name, is an excellent bluesman.

For such a young musician he plays his guitar like he had it in the cradle instead of a rattle or cuddly toy.

The album was produced by veteran musician and producer Eddy Morton in his Stourbridge studio and was recorded in a day.

This could be behind its raw, unpolished feel which gives it an honesty, authenticity and almost an urgency.

Drop Down Mama is one Derby-born Sunjay has been taking around on his tours for some time and now the foot stomper is down on disc it still has the feel of a live performance.

What follows is the depression era blues, Nobody Wants To Know You When You Down & Out where Sunjay shows a side to his playing that is slicker than a latex clad tobogganist who has been covered in grease and sent down an oiled slipway.

He keeps the bluesy sound but gives it the kind of polish you associate with Jake Thackray. If you want to get a feel for his skill with the frets then the next track Duncan & Brady is as good an example as any.

Sunjay has a really smooth style of playing blues. His voice lends itself more to the serpentine sound rather than the dirty or gritty vocals of legends such as Howlin' Wolf, Muddy Waters or Lightnin' Hopkins. This album is a testimony to his talent. He sounds cool, plays cool, looks cool so much so you almost expect a little light to come when he opens his guitar case.



Sunjay along with Eddy Morton laid down his new album in one day

Sam Kelly Lost Boys

This is a superb album not just because of Sam Kelly's fantastic voice and ability to fill the songs he sings with life but also it reeks of folk, but it drips tradition and is the antithesis of so many albums which are trying to make folk sound more commercial.

Kelly's debut album opens with Jolly Waggoners where he shows you all you need is an instrument, a good voice, enthusiasm for what you are singing.

Banish Misfortune brings in the superb banjo picking of Jamie Francis, who wrote the track and whose style sounds very much like the precision playing of Gerry O'Connor.

Kelly's distinct voice which has that slight warble alongside Francis' picking gives the mountain sound of Six Miners some authenticity with the singer opening it up with a whole new freshness. What has also makes this so enjoyable is the quality of talent Kelly has assembled around him which includes Ciaran Algar, Graham Coe, Lukas Drinkwater and Josh Franklin.

Mairead & Anna Best Day

If you could make a mink coat out of music then this selection from Scottish duo Mairead Green and Anna Massie would fit the bill.

Green and Massie are like a two woman orchestra and this album gives them more than ample opportunity to show off their impressive multi-instrumental skills.

This is a chance to enjoy two of the most talented Scottish female folk musicians around.

Damien O'Kane Areas of High Traffic

It's been five years since the talented honorary Yorkshireman produced a solo album. This is a very personal collection from Damien O'Kane and one where he is trying to give traditional songs, which mean a great deal to him, a modern slant.

The Colrairie-born artist is a fine singer, songwriter, guitarist and music arranger.

His voice has that distinctive and traditional Gaelic quality, which has the drone feel of the uilleann pipes.

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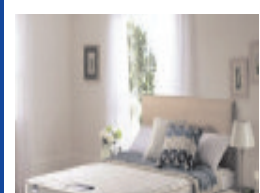
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Fun trip back to the 60s, you can spray that again



The cast of Hairspray are in action at the New Alexandra Theatre in Birmingham during the festive season

Hairspray, New Alexandra Theatre, Birmingham

THE musical with big hair and even bigger heart, Hairspray, is back in a joyous new production that is providing the alternative to panto in Brum this festive season.

However, that doesn't mean it hasn't got a dame. Indeed, it has a hefty helping of man in drag with Tony Maudsley (best known as hairdresser Kenneth in Benidorm) as a gruff-voiced Edna Turnblad, a role made famous by Divine and then John Travolta in film and Michael Ball in the West End.

She's the formidable mother of Tracy Turnblad, the beehived high school teen who takes it on herself to integrate TV's Corny Collins dance show in 1962 Baltimore so black and white youngsters can dance together.

The civil rights message is contained within the wittiest and warmest Broadway musical of the past 15

**REVIEW BY
LEON BURAKOWSKI**

years and it's good to have Hairspray back, even though it's only been two years since it's last UK tour. That featured Freya Sutton as the irrepressible, all-singing, all-dancing Tracy, and she's back to reprise her dynamic performance.

The new production is enhanced with better sets including some nice attention to details, like the genuine 60s US ads that play on monitors during the interval. There is fine support from West End stalwart Claire Sweeney as the venomous Velma Von Tussle and Dex Lee as the slick, soulful Seaweed. Pint-sized dynamo Karis Jack has all the right moves as Little Inez, Seaweed's sister; Monique Young is a gem as Tracy's awkward best friend Penny; and Ashley Gilmour sets hearts a-flutter as teen idol Link.

Former Blue Peter presenter Peter Duncan is a revelation, showing that he is a real showman and entertainer in the role of Edna's husband Wilbur. Their funny and sentimental duet You're Timeless To Me was a highlight, as was former X Factor finalist Brenda Edwards delivering a truly soul-stirring performance of gospel number I Know Where I've Been as the big, blonde and beautiful Motor-mouth Maybelle.

The only minor quibble on Monday night was that some of Scott Whittman and Marc Shaiman's amusing lyrics were lost in the sound mix, though it was good to have a live band at the back of the stage.

This production of Hairspray is a toe-tapping, finger-snapping hoot that got a standing ovation from a delighted audience... you can't stop the beat, at least not until it ends its run at the Alex on Saturday.

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Railway opinions wanted

PASSENGERS, businesses and residents in Staffordshire are being encouraged to have their say on the future of the region's rail services by taking part in a government consultation. The Government is asking for views on how the next West Midlands franchise, which covers the region's local rail network as well as longer-distance services to the north-west of England and London, can provide the services that people need. The 14-week consultation is being carried out jointly with West Midlands Rail, a partnership of local transport authorities set up to improve rail services.

Number of jobless sees fall across the region

UNEMPLOYMENT in the West Midlands region fell by almost a fifth over the last year, new figures reveal.

In an end-of-year boost to the Government, statistics showed near-record numbers of people in work across the region.

At the same time the number of people claiming out-of-work benefits has continued to fall across the Black Country and Staffordshire.

Nationwide unemployment is now at a seven-year low, down by 110,000 in the quarter to October to 1.7 million. At the same time, across the UK, more than 31 million people are in work, the highest since comparable records began in 1971.

In the West Midlands unemployment fell by 3,000 to 153,000 and has dropped by more than 18 per cent in the last 12 months. Employment in the region rose 22,000 to 2,617,000 over the last quarter.

Allowance

Employment Minister Priti Patel said: "The number of people in work in the West Midlands is almost at a record high."

In Staffordshire, the number of people claiming job seekers' allowance has fallen to a record low at just 0.7 per cent of the population.

County Council economy leader Mark Winnington said: "This is a fantastic way to see out 2015 - the lowest ever figure for JSA claimants in the county. It is rewarding for everyone in Staffordshire to end the year on a high when it comes to improving people's employment opportunities."

Overall jobless benefit claimant numbers for Staf-

fordshire fell by just 36 last month, to 4,515. Numbers were down in Cannock Chase, by four to 690 and by 68 in Stafford to 575. But they were up by 19 in South Staffordshire, to 685, and rose by 21 in Lichfield to 415.

In Wolverhampton the claimant count fell by 124 to 5,885, while in Walsall it was down by 40 to 4,230 and in Sandwell it fell 105 to 6,335. But the number of people claiming benefits in Dudley increased, by 93, to 5,275.

Cathy Taylor, from Jobcentre Plus in the Black Country, said: "Across the area we have seen the number of young people claiming down by 26 per cent, while overall claimant figures are down 21 per cent."

After the recent Christmas recruitment surge,

Mrs Taylor said her team was now preparing to deal with the first workers to be laid off from Goodyear, which is closing over the next two years, having already worked with those who lost their jobs at Caparo.

She said more jobs were expected in the care sector and hospitality industry in the area next year, alongside the constant demand from the expanding Jaguar Land Rover engine factory beside the M54.

Council chiefs in attendance at firm expansion

COUNCIL bosses attended a ceremony to mark the official opening of BOC's newly extended Gas & Gear retail unit in Norton Canes.

Maureen Freeman, chairman of Cannock Chase Council, and Glenn Watson, the authority's planning and economic development services manager, were the special guests.

BOC is a leading supplier of industrial and medical gases as well as being a distributor of welding products.

The enlarged store, which is open to the general public as well as to trade, carries the full range of products and services from BOC,

a member of The Linde Group. Operations manager Andy Bridger said: "BOC's significant investment in this site reflects the growth we seen from a buoyant local market and our commitment to the wide range of customers we serve from the medical and traditional manufacturing sectors."

Councillor Gordon Alcott, cabinet leader for economic development and planning, said: "The decision by BOC to invest in their Norton Canes unit is very welcome news and is a vote of confidence in the local area where the company has a solid and growing customer base."

By Simon Penfold

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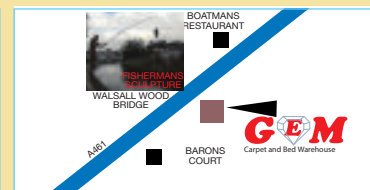
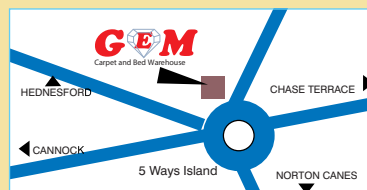
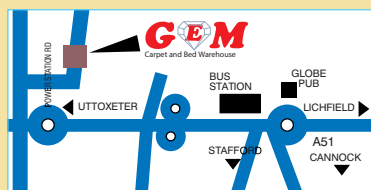
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New Year's Day

BBC 1	BBC 2	ITV	Ch4	Ch5
 <p>Julie Andrews, The Sound of Music, on at 1.15pm</p> <p>6.00 Breakfast Round-up of national and international news, plus the latest from the money markets. 9.00 FILM: Turbo (2013) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of Ryan Reynolds. ★★ 10.25 FILM: Monsters vs Aliens (2009) Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Reese Witherspoon. ★★ 11.55 Top of the Pops New Year With KDA, Tinie Tempah and Katy B, the Vaccines and Sigala. 12.55 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message The Most Rev Justin Welby delivers his New Year address. 1.00 BBC News at One; Weather 1.10 Midlands Today; Weather 1.15 FILM: The Sound of Music (1965) Rodgers and Hammerstein musical, starring Julie Andrews. ★★</p>	 <p>The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett, on at 8.30pm</p> <p>6.35 FILM: Sinbad: Legend of the Seven Seas (2003) Animated adventure, with the voice of Brad Pitt. ★★ 7.50 Natural World: Honey Badgers - Masters of Mayhem (R) 8.50 FILM: Viva Las Vegas (1964) Musical, starring Elvis Presley. ★★ 10.15 Darcey's Ballet Heroes Darcey Bussell considers the dancers who transformed male ballet. (R) 11.15 New Year's Day Vienna Concert 2016 12.45 FILM: Little Women (1994) Period drama, starring Winona Ryder. ★★ 2.40 FILM: The Eagle Has Landed (1976) A Nazi agent plans to kidnap Churchill as the prime minister spends the weekend in a Norfolk village. Wartime adventure, starring Michael Caine. ★★</p>	 <p>Gino's Italian Escape - Islands in the Sun, on at 8.00pm</p> <p>6.00 CITV: Dino Dan. (R) 6.10 Dino Dan (R) 6.25 Sooty (R) 6.40 Super 4 (R) 7.00 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.15 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.30 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 7.45 Mr Bean: The Animated Series (R) 8.00 Oddbods (R) 8.05 A Grizzly New Year Tale (R) 8.35 Almost Naked Animals (R) 8.50 Almost Naked Animals (R) 9.10 Horrid Henry (R) 9.25 Dickinson's Real Deal (R) 10.30 Judge Rinder (R) 11.30 Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) 12.25 Celebrity Squares With Sarah Millican, Ana Matronic, Joe Lycett and Tess Daly. (R) 1.10 ITV Lunchtime News: Weather. 1.25 FILM: Dr No (1962) James Bond spy thriller, starring Sean Connery. ★★</p>	 <p>Matthew Broderick stars, Inspector Gadget, on at 11.15pm</p> <p>7.30 The Big Bang Theory The gang celebrates Star Wars Day. (R) 7.55 The Big Bang Theory Penny gets fired from the movie. (R) 8.20 FILM: Planet 51 (2009) An astronaut travels to another world where the alien inhabitants believe him to be the scout for a planned invasion. Animated sci-fi comedy, with the voice of Dwayne Johnson. ★★ 10.10 The Simpsons Lisa accepts an invitation to join a Wiccan coven. (R) 11.15 FILM: Inspector Gadget (1999) Disney comedy adventure, starring Matthew Broderick. ★ 12.55 Channel 4 Racing Nick Luck presents live coverage of six races. From Cheltenham, races start at 1.20, 1.55, 2.30 and 3.05. From Musselburgh, at 1.35 and 2.10.</p>	 <p>Entertaining famous faces, An Audience with Ken Dodd, on at 9.00pm</p> <p>6.00 Milkshake! 9.35 FILM: Thomas & Friends: Sodor's Legend of the Lost Treasure (2015) Premiere. Animated adventure, featuring the voice of Joseph May. ★★ 10.50 FILM: Carry On Cabby (1963) The neglected wife of a workaholic taxi owner secretly launches a rival cab firm using women drivers to tempt customers away from him. Comedy, starring Sid James. (b/w) ★★ 12.35 FILM: Harry and the Hendersons (1987) A family's holiday in the mountains is thrown into turmoil by an encounter with the legendary Bigfoot, whom they end up taking home. Comedy, with John Lithgow. ★★ 2.45 FILM: Dracula: Dead and Loving It (1995) With Leslie Nielsen. ★</p>
<p>4.05 Shaun the Sheep: The Farmer's Llamas (R) 4.30 Wreck-It Ralph (2012) Premiere. Animated adventure, with the voice of John C Reilly and Sarah Silverman. ★★ 6.05 BBC News 6.20 Midlands Today; Weather 6.30 EastEnders Mick and Linda's wedding day arrives. 7.00 Billionaire Boy Len Spud and his 12-year-old son Joe become billionaires when Len invents a new toilet roll. However, the money fails to bring them happiness. John Thomson stars. 8.00 EastEnders With Dean now outed as the black sheep of the family, he continues his revenge plot against the Carters. 8.30 Dickensian Compeyson goes to desperate lengths to make Miss Havisham notice him, and Martha Cratchit's wedding plans are thrown into turmoil by an unexpected knock at the door. 9.00 Sherlock The apparent ghost of a woman who took her own life prowls the streets of London with an unshakeable thirst for revenge, forcing Holmes to use all his cunning to defeat her. 10.30 Mrs Brown's Boys New Year Special A handsome stranger reveals he only has eyes for one special woman - Agnes Brown. The second of two festive instalments of the comedy, written by and starring Brendan O'Carroll. 11.10 BBC News; Weather. 11.25 Midlands Today; Weather; National Lottery Update 11.35 Adele at the BBC The singer-songwriter chats to Graham Norton about life and career, and is accompanied by her band on classic tracks and songs from her album 25. (R) 12.50 Weather for the Week Ahead 12.55 BBC News</p>	<p>4.50 Gorilla Family and Me Part two of two. Gordon Buchanan revisits the apes. (R) 5.50 The Archbishop of Canterbury's New Year Message The Most Rev Justin Welby delivers his New Year address. (R) 5.55 The Terminal (2004) Comedy, starring Tom Hanks and Catherine Zeta-Jones. ★★ 8.00 Christmas University Challenge 2015 Two teams of distinguished graduates compete on behalf of their former universities in the final of the festive edition of the quiz. Jeremy Paxman hosts. Last in the series. 8.30 The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett Profiling the TV comedy actor who found fame at the relatively late age of 36 via the First Report, revealing some lesser-known details of his life and career. 9.30 The One Ronnie Comedy show from 2010 in which Ronnie Corbett celebrates his 80th birthday with a series of sketches. Featuring guest stars including David Walliams, Matt Lucas and Miranda Hart. (R) 10.20 Catch Me If You Can (2002) A conman lies his way across America, posing as a pilot, a doctor and a lawyer, while outwitting the FBI at every turn. Fact-based drama, starring Leonardo DiCaprio, Tom Hanks, Christopher Walken and Martin Sheen. ★★ 12.30 FILM: Shadow of a Doubt (1943) Alfred Hitchcock's thriller, starring Joseph Cotten. (b/w) ★★ 2.15 Top Gear: From A to Z Part two of two. Alphabetical highlights from the Clarkson, May and Hammond era. (R) 3.15 Sign Zone: Hugh's War on Waste Hugh Fearnley-Whittingstall sets out to reduce the amount of food we waste. (R) 4.15 Sign Zone: The Secrets of the Mona Lisa Exploring major new findings about Leonardo da Vinci's famous masterpiece. (R) 5.15 This Is BBC Two</p>	<p>3.35 Midsomer Murders (R) 5.35 Wild River with Ray Mears 6.40 ITV Evening News; Weather. 7.00 Emmerdale Debbie visits Charity in prison, and the experience leaves her determined to leave town for good, while Chas is shocked by Gordon's account of his life since they split up. 7.30 Coronation Street Carla tells Johnny she will keep his secret if he leaves the factory and moves away, and gets more than she bargained for during a game of roulette with Robert. 8.00 Gino's Italian Escape - Islands in the Sun Gino D'Acampo ends his tour of Sicily by making cannoli, climbing the craters of Mount Etna and visiting a town that featured in the Godfather movies. Last in the series. 8.30 Coronation Street Carla swears Robert to secrecy after their moment of passion, and Roy tries to forget the incriminating letter which reveals Alan had an affair with Cathy's sister, Nessa. 9.00 The Big Quiz - Coronation Street v Emmerdale Stephen Mulhern hosts as stars from the soaps are tested on the biggest events and the funniest moments in the Yorkshire Dales and on the cobbles during 2015. 10.00 ITV News; Weather. 10.15 The Jonathan Ross Show Christmas Special The host subjects another batch of celebrity guests to no-holds-barred questioning. Plus, musical performances by (R) 11.20 American Pie: The Wedding (2003) The friends reunite to celebrate Jim and Michelle's forthcoming trip to the altar - but events quickly spiral out of control. Comedy sequel, with Jason Biggs. ★★ 1.00 Jackpot247</p>	<p>3.35 The Golden Compass (2007) Fantasy adventure, starring Dakota Blue Richards and Nicole Kidman. ★★ 5.50 Channel 4 News Including sport and weather. 6.00 Tangled (2010) A princess locked in a tower by a witch escapes with the aid of a bandit and tries to find her way home. Disney animation, with the voices of Mandy Moore and Zachary Levi. ★★ 8.00 Jamie and Jimmy's Friday Night Feast New series. Orlando Bloom joins hosts Jamie Oliver and Jimmy Doherty to rustle up a Moroccan tagine. Plus, Asian seafood parcels and a great British banger that can be trusted. 9.00 A Good Day to Die Hard (2013) Premiere. John McClane goes to Moscow and helps his CIA agent son stop the Russian Mob from stealing nuclear weapons. Action adventure sequel, with Bruce Willis and Jai Courtney. ★★ 11.00 Rude Tube: Welcome to 2016 A real-life Alan Partridge, 50 Shades of Grey in Lego and Darth Vader on a mini Segway are among the items featured as Alex Zane marks the end of 2015 with a series compilation. 1.10 FILM: Damien: Omen II (1978) The Devil's son is now in his teens and has come to terms with his demonic fate, unleashing another series of murders. Horror sequel, with Jonathan Scott-Taylor and William Holden. ★★ 3.00 Friday Night Dinner Mum and Dad's anniversary goes awry. (R) 3.25 You Deserve This House A woman who runs a swimming club for youngsters with disabilities. (R) 4.20 Location, Location, Location Two couples who returned to the UK after travelling the world. (R) 5.15 Hugh's 3 Good Things: Best Bites A recipe for a baked potato stuffed with curried mushrooms. (R) 5.20 Deal or No Deal (R)</p>	<p>4.30 Greystoke: The Legend of Tarzan, Lord of the Apes (1984) Drama, starring Christopher Lambert. ★★ 7.00 World's Strongest Man Final 2015 Action from the Grand Final of the competition, which took place in Malaysia, as the 10 competitors who made it past the heats went head to head for the trophy. Last in the series; 5 News Update 8.00 Christmas with the Double Acts An hour of side-splitting fun with some of the greatest double acts to have graced the small screen, proving that when it comes to comedy, two are often better than one; (R) 5 News Update 9.00 An Audience with Ken Dodd Comedy and entertainment from the Liverpool comedian, as he celebrates his long career in showbusiness with the help of an all-star audience. (R) 10.55 Greatest Stand-Up Comedians A countdown of the 50 funniest people to have performed stand-up routines, featuring Tommy Cooper, Joan Rivers and Robin Williams. With contributions by Paul Hogan and Ross Noble. (R) 1.55 SuperCasino Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. 3.10 Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild It is June at Loch Lomond and Trossachs National Park, and cameras follow the newborns as they learn to fight, find food and avoid predators. (R) 4.00 Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild Cameras document autumn events at Loch Lomond and the Trossachs National Park, a time for the red deer rut, when stags battle for the right to breed. (R) 4.45 House Doctor Ann Maurice helps a couple spruce up their tiny cottage in a bid to make it more attractive to prospective buyers, using small furniture to create an illusion of space. (R) 5.10 House Doctor Advice for a couple desperate to sell their Bournemouth home. (R)</p>
Early View	Prime Time	Late View		

CHOICE



Alexander Armstrong

Bruce's Hall of Fame with Alexander Armstrong (BBC1, 6pm)

When Bruce Forsyth fell at his home and suffered minor concussion in October, he was told to rest for a few days. Fronting this show was out of the question, so Alexander Armstrong, who was due to be a guest on the strand, has stepped in to fill the gap. Joining him in paying tribute to their inspirations are comedian and actress Catherine Tate; former Pussycat Doll Kimberley Wyatt; Australian actor, singer and dancer Adam Garcia; EastEnders actress and singer Shona McGarty; Britain's Got Talent runner-up, magician and illusionist Jamie Raven, and West-End star Beverley Knight. Paying homage to their heroes, they discover what it's like to perform as their showbiz legends would have done.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **10.00** Saturday Kitchen. **11.30** James Martin: Home Comforts. **12.00** BBC News; Weather. **12.10** Football Focus. **12.50** Saturday Sportsday. **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the opening day of the tournament. **4.30** Final Score. **5.10** Celebrity Mastermind. **5.40** BBC News. **5.50** Regional Programme.

6.00 Bruce's Hall of Fame with Alexander Armstrong. Presenter Alexander Armstrong steps in for host Bruce Forsyth as seven famous faces are given a chance to pay homage to their idols. Comedienne Catherine Tate, former Pussycat Doll Kimberley Wyatt, actor Adam Garcia, West End actress Beverley Knight, comedienne Katherine Ryan, EastEnders star Shona McGarty and Britain's Got Talent runner-up Jamie Raven take to the stage to enjoy a moment in the limelight as their favourite stars.

7.10 Film: Iron Man 3. (2013) Premiere. The armoured avenger hunts for the mastermind behind an untraceable series of bombings, despite being cut off from his usual resources and traumatised by a recent brush with death. His search uncovers a secret conspiracy involving a drug that renders the user indestructible. Superhero adventure sequel, starring Robert Downey Jr, Gwyneth Paltrow and Don Cheadle.

9.10 Casualty. As Cal struggles to deal with his recent terrifying discovery, he discovers he is much braver than he realises. Hospital drama, starring Richard Winsor and Lee Mead.

10.00 The National Lottery Live. Gaby Roslin presents as the all-important winning numbers are revealed.

10.10 BBC News. Weather.

10.30 Match of the Day. Gary Lineker presents highlights of the latest Premier League fixtures, including West Ham United v Liverpool, Manchester United v Swansea City and Watford v Manchester City; National Lottery Update.

12.00 Film: Black Death. (2010) A naive monk joins a band of mercenaries on a mission to expose witchcraft as the bubonic plague sweeps the country. Medieval thriller, starring Sean Bean. **1.35** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.40** BBC News.

BBC2

6.10 Race to Super Bowl 50. (R) **7.00** Film: The Valley of Gwangi. (1969) **8.35** Film: Merrill's Marauders. (1962) **10.10** Animal Park. (R) **11.10** Natural World. (R) **12.00** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **12.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **1.15** Sex Symbols: Talking Pictures. **1.55** Film: Cat on a Hot Tin Roof. (1958) Drama, starring Paul Newman and Elizabeth Taylor. **3.40** Coast. (R) **4.30** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. **5.40** Growing Up Wild: Natural World. (R)

6.40 Flag It! Paul Martin looks into the history of Wellington College, Berkshire, where experts Elizabeth Talbot and Philip Serrell evaluate antiques before the auction. (R)

7.40 The Many Faces of Ronnie Corbett. Profiling the TV comedy actor who found fame at the relatively late age of 36 via the Frost Report, revealing some lesser-known details of his life and career. (R)

8.40 Dad's Army. (R)

9.10 Leningrad and the Orchestra That Defied Hitler. Amanda Vickery and Tom Service tell the story of the remarkable performance at the Philharmonic Hall in Leningrad in 1942 of Shostakovich's 7th Symphony. In the midst of a siege that would ultimately kill around 750,000 civilians, an orchestra of starving musicians was assembled to perform the composer's latest work, which itself had to be smuggled into the city after being completed while Shostakovich had been evacuated. This film explores the development of the music and features extracts from the symphony, filmed in the same location as the historic concert, and conducted by Maxim Shostakovich, the composer's son.

10.40 QI XL. An extended edition, in which question-master Stephen Fry probes the subject of Messing with Your Mind, with Sarah Millican, Tommy Tiernan, Josh Widdicombe and Alan Davies.

11.25 Darts: BDO World Championships. Action from the opening day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green, which featured first-round matches in the men's and ladies' competitions.

12.15 Darts: BDO World Championships - Extra Time. **2.15** Film: Horror Hospital. (1973) **3.40** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITY: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.05** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** Thunderbirds Are Go. **9.00** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.15** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.15** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.20** ITV News: Weather. **12.30** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.30** Catchphrase. (R) **2.15** Off Their Rockers. (R) **2.45** Film: From Russia with Love. (1963) James Bond thriller, starring Sean Connery. **5.00** Panda Babies. (R)

6.00 Regional Programme; Weather.

6.15 ITV News: Weather.

6.30 New You've Been Framed. New series. Harry Hill narrates a comical selection of mishaps filmed by viewers.

7.00 Ninja Warrior UK. New series. Competitors from across the nation test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara. Those who make it to the end of the adrenaline-fuelled mission face one final task – scaling the heights of a tower named Mount Midoriyama – as the battle it out for the title of Ninja Warrior UK.

8.00 Take Me Out. New series. A cosmetics consultant, a video marketing whiz, a children's football coach and an account manager set out to impress a line-up of single women.

9.00 Film: The Dark Knight. (2008) In the sequel to Batman Begins, the masked hero finds a new ally in his war on organised crime in Gotham's crusading new district attorney, Harvey Dent. However, both men are pushed to their limits by the rise of the Joker, a criminal mastermind spreading chaos and destruction throughout the city for his own amusement. Comic-book thriller, starring Christian Bale, Aaron Eckhart and an Oscar-winning Heath Ledger. Continues after the news.

10.05 ITV News: Weather.

10.25 Film: The Dark Knight. (2008) Concluded.

12.15 Jackpot247. **3.00** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **3.50** ITV Nightcurser.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.30** Film: The War of the Worlds. (1953) Sci-fi drama, starring Gene Barry. **8.00** The Morning Line. **9.00** Film: True Grit. (1969) Western, starring John Wayne. **11.40** Film: Thunderbirds. (2004) Sci-fi adventure, starring Bill Paxton. **1.30** Channel 4 Racing. Live coverage from Sandown Park, Ayr and Chelmsford City. **4.00** Channel 4 News. **4.20** The Simpsons. (R) **4.50** Film: Mission: Impossible. (1996) Action thriller, starring Tom Cruise.

6.50 Film: Mission: Impossible 2. (2000) Secret agent Ethan Hunt is sent to find and destroy the only sample of a deadly man-made virus. However, he faces tough opposition in a former spy-turned-criminal mastermind who has already acquired the cure and now wants the pathogen itself. Director John Woo's action thriller sequel, starring Tom Cruise, Dougray Scott, Thandie Newton and Anthony Hopkins.

9.00 The World's Greatest Spy Movies. A countdown of the 10 most thrilling espionage films of all time, chosen by real spies and spy-masters from MI6, the CIA and the KGB. The programme untangles fact from fiction, from Le Carre-style gritty realism to the outlandish espionage fantasies of Jason Bourne, and British superhero James Bond, revealing which film comes closest to the truth, and which has won the number one spot.

10.35 Film: Tinker Tailor Soldier Spy. (2011) A former intelligence operative is brought out of retirement to uncover a Soviet mole in a high-ranking position in MI6. Cold War thriller, starring Gary Oldman and Colin Firth.

1.00 Film: Marley. (2012) Documentary about Bob Marley, examining his life and his enduring political and musical impact.

3.30 TFI New Year's Eve. Chris Evans prepares to welcome in the new year with a mix of chat, raucous stunts and music, with Olly Murs, Quentin Tarantino, Sia and New Order, the Vaccines and Izzy Bizu. (R) **5.00** Phil Spencer: Secret Agent. The property expert offers advice to a woman in Waterlooville, Hampshire, who has been trying to sell her three-bed terrace for six months without any luck. (R) **5.50** How I Met Your Mother. Marshall becomes terrified of his boss after seeing him yell at a colleague and begins to question whether he can justify staying in his job. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **8.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **9.30** The Saturday Show. **11.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **12.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **1.25** Film: Columbo Goes to the Guillotine. (1959) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **3.20** Film: Columbo: Candidate for Crime. (1973) Detective drama, starring Peter Falk. **5.15** The Hunt for Hitler's Missing Millions. (R)

6.10 World War II in Colour. The story of the global conflict told using colourised archive footage, beginning with an examination of its origins. Narrated by actor Robert Powell. (R)

7.00 Ben Fogle: New Lives in the Winter Wonderland. The adventurer travels to Alaska to visit Bretwood Higman and Erin McCittrick, who hiked 4,000 miles to get to their new home, where they are now bringing up their two children. They spend half the year in a self-built Mongolian-style yurt on the mountainside, with the other six months dedicated to hiking in the region's wildernesses. (R)

8.00 Building the Ice Hotel. The work of builders constructing Icehotel, a sophisticated structure built every year since 1990 in the village of Jukkasjarvi – more than 120 miles inside the Arctic Circle. (R)

8.55 5 News Weekend.

9.00 Football League Tonight. Kelly Cates and George Riley present extended highlights of the weekend's top matches, including Middlesbrough v Derby County at the Riverside Stadium in the Championship and Sheffield United v Peterborough United at Bramall Lane in League One. Boro and the Rams are both considered as strong contenders to gain automatic promotion back to the Premier League, so a win over one of their rivals would be seen as a morale boost for both. Plus, all the goals from League Two, were matches included Portsmouth v Crawley Town at Fratton Park.

10.30 20 Moments That Rocked Talent Shows. A journey through the instances that rocked the genre and the fall-out that followed. (R)

11.55 Access. Showbiz news and gossip.

12.00 SuperCasino. **3.10** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **4.00** World's Strongest Man 2015. (R) **4.50** Make It Big. (R) **5.40** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three

7.00 Great TV Mistakes **7.10** Top Gear **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride **9.10** Sherlock **10.45** Family Guy **1.20** Together **3.50** Great TV Mistakes **4.00** Close

BBC Four

7.00 Stories from the Dark Earth: Meet the Ancestors Revisited **8.00** Castles - Britain's Fortified History **9.10** The Young Montalbano **10.50** The Kate Bush Story: Running Up That Hill **11.50** Kate Bush at the BBC **12.50** An Evening with Glen Campbell **2.10** Country at the BBC **3.40** Close

ITV2

11.50 The Big Quiz – Coronation Street v Emmerdale **12.50** Catchphrase **1.30** Film: The Night Vampire (2000) **3.30** Film: Horrid Henry: The Movie (2011) **5.25** Film: Liar Liar (1997) **7.05** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **9.00** Take Me Out – The Gospel **10.00** Film: Bridget Jones's Diary (2001) **12.00** Film: American Pie (1999) **1.50** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.40** Teleshopping **5.40** ITV2 Nightscreen

ITV3

11.25 Film: Emma (1996) **1.55** Foyle's War **3.55** Film: Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **5.55** Midsomer Murders **8.00** Foyle's War: The Movie **12.00** Marchlands **1.05** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **2.05** ITV3 Nightscreen **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV4

11.50 Storage Wars **12.45** Film: Spartacus (1960) **4.30** Film: Superman (1978) **7.35** Film: Space Cowboys (2000) **10.00** Film: Magnum Force (1973) **12.35** Film: Inside Man (2006) **3.00** Teleshopping

E4

11.00 Made in Chelsea: New Year **12.00** Couples Come Dine with Me **2.00** Rude(ish) Tube **3.00** Film: Toy Story OF TERROR! (2013) **3.25** Toy Story Toons **4.00** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas **4.25** Film: Casper (1995) **6.30** The Big Bang Theory **9.00** Film: The Twilight Saga: Breaking Dawn – Part 2 (2012) **11.15** Gogglebox **12.55** The Inbetweeners **1.55** The IT Crowd **2.55** Gogglebox **3.35** Hollyoaks

Film4

11.00 Rio (2011) **1.00** Stuart Little (1999) **2.45** The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992) **4.35** Bandslam (2009) **6.45** The Family Stone (2005) **9.00** Rise of the Planet of the Apes (2011) Sci-fi thriller, starring James Franco. **11.05** Scary Movie (2000) **12.45** Scary Movie 2 (2001) **2.20** Silent House (2011) **4.00** Close

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CHOICE



Gillian Anderson

War & Peace (BBC1, 9pm)

Writer Andrew Davies, the man who turned Pride and Prejudice's Mr Darcy into a sex symbol, is now hoping he can transform Leo Tolstoy's tome into a small-screen classic. The latest adaptation opens in 1805, and as Russia declares war on Napoleon Bonaparte's French army, the lives of Pierre Bezukhov (Paul Dano), Andrei Bolkonsky (James Norton) and Natasha Rostova (Lily James) are about to change forever. Pierre is the illegitimate son of a wealthy count on the verge of death, his best friend Andrei is equally unhappy and eager for the challenge of war, and in Moscow, spirited teenager Natasha is desperate to experience life and love. The supporting cast includes Gillian Anderson and Jim Broadbent.

BBC1

6.00 Breakfast. **8.00** Match of the Day. (R) **9.30** Wanted Down Under. (R) **10.15** Homes Under the Hammer. (R) **11.15** Money for Nothing. (R) **12.00** Bargain Hunt. (R) **1.00** BBC News. Weather. **1.15** Britain's Muslim Soldiers. **1.55** Eat Well for Less? (R) **2.55** Escape to the Country. (R) **3.25** Billionaire Boy. (R) **4.25** Songs of Praise. **5.00** Great Barrier Reef with David Attenborough. (R)

6.00 BBC News.**6.20 Regional Programme.**

6.30 **Countryfile Compilation: Winter Wildlife.** Ellie Harrison reports from the Cotswold Water Park, where she helps with winter maintenance and finds out about a plan to study birds' underwater habits using plastic ducks. Matt Baker reports on Irish hares, Julia Bradbury goes in search of seals in Norfolk, Richard Taylor-Jones captures animals on camera, and Adam Henson helps bring Exmoor ponies down from the moors. Plus, a look back at the most memorable moments from the series featuring winter wildlife. Including Weather For The Week Ahead.

7.30 **Still Open All Hours.** Granville discovers a gap in the shop's security, and finds his efforts to matchmake Gastric and Made threatened by a neighbour's home cooking. A cherry picker causes anxiety.

8.00 **Antiques Roadshow.** Fiona Bruce presents the show from Bowood House in Wiltshire, where the items brought in to be valued include an account of the sinking of the Titanic by an officer who survived.

9.00 **War & Peace.** New series. Andrew Davies' adaptation of Tolstoy's epic story of five aristocratic families experiencing Napoleon's invasion of Russia in 1805.

10.00 BBC News.**10.20 Regional Programme.**

10.30 **Match of the Day 2.** Mark Chapman reviews the day's two Premier League matches, which were Crystal Palace v Chelsea at Selhurst Park and Everton v Tottenham Hotspur at Goodison Park.

11.35 **Film: The Road.** (2009) Drama, starring Viggo Mortensen, Kodi Smit-McPhee and Charlize Theron. **1.15** Weather for the Week Ahead. **1.20** BBC News.

BBC2

6.30 The A to Z of TV Gardening. (R) **7.15** Monty Don's Italian Gardens. (R) **8.15** Countryfile Compilation: The Farming Year. (R) **9.15** Saturday Kitchen Best Bites. **10.45** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **11.30** Len and Ainsley's Big Food Adventure. (R) **12.15** MOTD2 Extra. **1.00** Live Darts: BDO World Championships. Coverage of the second day of the tournament. **5.00** Flog It! (R)

6.00 **The Great History Quiz: The Tudors.** Kirsty Young asks the questions in this quiz which sees two teams of historians, captained by Lucy Worsley and Dan Snow, answer questions on all aspects of Tudor life. The contestants are writer and broadcaster Anna Whitelock, Horrible Histories consultant Jenn Jenner, author Kate Williams and architectural historian Jonathan Foyle. (R)

7.00 **The Millionaires Gift Guide.** Documentary examining the world of event planners and suppliers of luxury goods, who cater to a wealthy clientele, including a children's Christmas party at a stately home.

8.00 **Dragons' Den.** A former contestant makes a second attempt to impress the panel, and a former figure skater fails to inspire much confidence in Peter Jones.

9.00 **My Mediterranean with Adrian Chiles.** Part one of two. The journalist examines religious festivals in the region, learning about the similarities and differences between the three main religions that co-exist there.

10.00 **Charlie Brooker's 2015 Wipe.** The broadcaster takes a satirical look back at the events of the past 12 months, including the beginning of Corbyn-mania and a Tory majority, and the end of Page Three. (R)

11.00 **Abz on the Christmas Farm.** Abz Love and his girlfriend Vicky Fallon spend Christmas reflecting on the successes and failures of their year running a smallholder farm in Wales. (R)

11.30 **Darts: BDO World Championships.** Action from the second day at the Lakeside Country Club in Frimley Green.

12.20 **Darts: BDO World Championships – Extra Time.** **2.20** Sign Zone: Countryfile Compilation: The Farming Year. (R) **3.15** Holby City. (R) **4.15** This Is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Fort Boyard Ultimate Challenge. **6.20** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.30** Pat & Stan. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **6.50** Dino Dan: Trek's Adventures. (R) **7.00** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.05** Oddbods. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.20** Super 4. (R) **7.35** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **7.50** Mr Bean: The Animated Series. (R) **8.05** The Aquabats! Super Show! (R) **8.30** A Grizzly New Year's Tale: The Crystal Eye. (R) **9.00** The Tom & Jerry Show. (R) **9.25** ITV News. **9.30** Murder, She Wrote. (R) **10.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.30** ITV News. Weather. **12.40** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.40** Catchphrase. (R) **2.25** Ninja Warrior UK. (R) **3.25** Film: Goldfinger. (1964) James Bond adventure, starring Sean Connery. **5.35** Regional Programme: Weather. **5.45** ITV News. Weather.

6.00 **Ninja Warrior UK.** Competitors from across the UK test their strength, speed and courage in this obstacle-course challenge, hosted by Ben Shepherd, Rochelle Humes and Chris Kamara.

7.00 **Beowulf: Return to the Shieldlands.** New series. The warrior returns to his homeland after 20 years to pay his respects to the town's ailing leader, and sets out to hunt down a mysterious creature terrorising the land.

8.00 **Endeavour.** New series. The young detective is suspended from duty following a recent case. However, he is roused from his bitterness and self-pity when the body of a woman who went missing at a funfair on Cowley Green is found near his home. He resolves to conduct a secret investigation of his own, which leads him to the city's social elite and a disturbing secret hidden in plain sight. Shaun Evans stars as the young Inspector Morse in the third series of the detective drama.

10.00 **ITV News.** Weather.

10.20 **Joanna Lumley's Trans-Siberian Adventure.** The actress travels the length of the Trans-Siberian Railway, taking in Hong Kong, Beijing, the Great Wall and the Gobi desert in the first leg of her trek. (R)

11.20 **Premiership Rugby Union.** Action from the eighth round of fixtures. **12.15** Jackpot247. **3.00** The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen. **5.05** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R)

CHANNEL 4

6.15 Film: The Parent Trap. (1961) **8.30** Frasier. (R) **9.00** Frasier. (R) **9.30** Sunday Brunch. **12.30** The Simpsons. (R) **12.55** The Simpsons. (R) **1.25** The Simpsons. (R) **1.55** Film: Jungle 2 Jungle. (1997) Comedy, starring Tim Allen. **3.55** Film: A Monster in Paris. (2011) **5.40** Channel 4 News.

6.00 **Film: Fantastic Four.** (2005) A scientist and four members of his crew develop superhuman powers after exposure to cosmic radiation on a mission to study an energy storm in space. Unfortunately, one of them chooses to use his newfound abilities for evil purposes, compelling the others to join forces to stop him. Sci-fi comic-book adventure, starring Ioan Gruffudd, Jessica Alba, Chris Evans and Michael Chiklis.

8.00 **Walking the Himalayas.** Levison Wood and his guide Malang Darya travels through Pakistan-controlled Kashmir and the Gilgit Valley, and aims to get as close to the heavily militarised border with India as he can, a dangerous journey that involves crossing a raging river and being met with suspicion by the local authorities. They meet a Nomadic tribe that has driven herds across the Himalayas for centuries and visits a valley which has been closed to foreigners for nearly 70 years.

9.00 **Deutschland 83.** New series. German Cold War spy drama. A young soldier serving in the East German military in 1983 is recruited to become a secret agent. He is given a new identity and sent over the Berlin Wall, where he must infiltrate the West German army and uncover details of American military plans in Europe. In German.

10.00 **Gogglebox 2015.** Highlights of the past year on Gogglebox, revisiting comments from armchair critics including Leon and June, Steph and Vicky Fallon, Dom, Christopher and Stephen, and Sandy and Sandra. (R)

11.30 **The Rich Kids of Instagram: Cutting Edge.** Documentary examining the lives of affluent young people who use photo and video-sharing service Instagram to flaunt their luxurious lifestyles online. (R)

12.30 **How the Rich Live Longer.** (R) **1.25** Hollyoaks. (R) **3.35** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.55** How I Met Your Mother. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake!: Peppa Pig. **6.05** Bananas in Pyjamas. (R) **6.20** Bob the Builder. (R) **6.30** Ticky Toc. (R) **6.40** Zack and Quack. (R) **6.55** Roobarb and Custard Too. (R) **7.00** Make Way for Noddy. (R) **7.15** Milkshake! Monkey. (R) **7.20** Paw Patrol. (R) **7.40** Little Princess. (R) **7.55** Pip Ahoy! (R) **8.10** Blaze and the Monster Machines. (R) **8.40** Ben and Holly's Little Kingdom. (R) **8.55** Wanda and the Alien. (R) **9.10** Toby's Travelling Circus. (R) **9.20** Jelly Jam. (R) **9.30** LazyTown. (R) **9.55** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.30** Football League Tonight. (R) **12.00** Funniest Fails. Falls & Flops. (R) **12.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **1.30** Loch Lomond: A Year in the Wild. (R) **2.30** Film: The Water Horse: Legend of the Deep. (2007) Children's fantasy adventure, starring Alex Etel. **4.35** 5 News Weekend. **4.45** Film: Snow White. (2001) Fairy-tale fantasy, starring Kristin Kreuk.

6.25 **Film: Cinderella.** (1950) An orphan is forced to live a life of servitude by her cruel stepmother. The king of the realm she lives in organises a lavish ball to find a bride for his son, and a caring fairy godmother puts her magic to the task of turning the downtrodden girl into a princess. Disney animated fairytale, with the voices of Ilene Woods, William Phipps and Verna Felton.

8.00 **Film: Legally Blonde.** (2001) A seemingly dizzy teenager is heartbroken when her boyfriend dumps her because he thinks she is not intelligent enough to help his political career. To prove him wrong she enrolls at Harvard, but finds herself out of her depth as other students do their best to humiliate her. Comedy, starring Reese Witherspoon, Luke Wilson, Selma Blair, Matthew Davis and Victor Garber.

10.00 **Most Shocking Celebrity Moments 2015.** Countdown of the biggest showbusiness stories and scandals of the year, including Bruce Jenner's transition to Caitlyn and the Top Gear bust-up involving Jeremy Clarkson. (R)

12.40 **SuperCasino.** Viewers get the chance to take part in live interactive gaming, with a mix of roulette-wheel spins and lively chat from the presenting team. **3.10** World's Strongest Man 2015. Action from the second heat of the competition from Malaysia. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. A cluttered B&B on the Norfolk coast. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.45** Angels of Jarm. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three
7.00 Top Gear. **8.00** Don't Tell the Bride. **9.00** Film: Shrek the Third (2007) **10.25** Russell Howard's Good News **10.55** Family Guy **11.40** American Dad! **12.25** Russell Howard's Good News **1.25** Footballers. Sex. Money. What's Gone Wrong? **2.25** Great TV Mistakes **2.35** Film: Hamlet 2 (2008) **4.00** Close

BBC Four
7.00 Treasures of Heaven **8.00** Westminster Abbey 9.00 Film: Citizen Kane (1941) **11.00** Orson Welles: Talking Pictures **11.45** The Richest Songs in the World **1.15** Michael Palin's Quest for Artemisia **2.15** Westminster Abbey **3.15** Britain on Film: Kids Today **3.45** Close

ITV2
12.25 Take Me Out **1.30** Take Me Out – The Gossip **2.30** Film: Evan Almighty (2007) **4.35** Film: Jurassic Park (1993) **7.00** Film: Nanny McPhee (2005) **9.00** Film: The Shawshank Redemption (1994) **11.55** Film: The Faculty (1998) **1.55** Totally Bonkers Guinness World Records **2.20** Rizzle Kicks: The Hot Desk **2.30** Teleshopping

ITV3
11.40 Film: Columbo: Agenda for Murder (1990) **1.45** The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes **3.55** Foyle's War **6.00** Midsomer Murders **8.00** The Cruise Ship **9.00** The Royal Variety Performance **2015** **11.50** Lewis **1.40** Film: 10 Little Indians (1974) **3.20** Where the Heart Is **4.40** Heartbeat **5.30** On the Buses **5.55** ITV3 Nightscreen

ITV4
12.00 Film: Destry (1954) **2.05** Film: Cheyenne Autumn (1964) **5.10** Film: Rio Bravo (1959) **8.00** Premiership Rugby Union **9.00** Film: The Krays (1990) **11.35** Film: Public Enemies (2009) **2.15** Ax Men **3.00** Teleshopping

E4
12.30 Film: Space Chimps (2008) **2.05** Film: Space Chimps 2: Zartog Strikes Back (2010) **3.45** Toy Story Toons **4.10** Ice Age: A Mammoth Christmas **4.40** Ride(ish) Tube **5.00** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** Film: Johnny English Reborn (2011) **10.00** Tattoo Fixers **11.05** The Inbetweeners **12.15** The IT Crowd **1.20** Gogglebox **2.10** How I Met Your Mother **3.00** Rules of Engagement **3.40** The Cleveland Show **4.25** Revenge

Film4
11.00 Paranorman (2012) **1.00** Stuart Little 2 (2002) **2.30** Tooth Fairy (2010) **4.35** Inkheart (2008) **6.40** Cutthroat Island (1995) **9.00** Faster (2010) **10.55** GI Joe: The Rise of Cobra (2009) **1.10** Choke (2008) **3.05** Close

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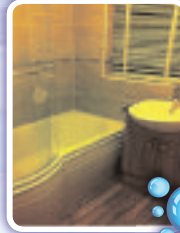
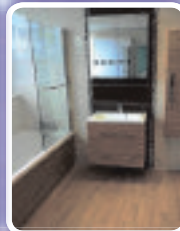
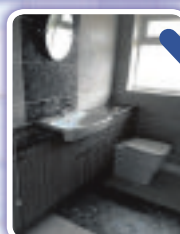
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FILM CHOICES

MONDAY
Archipelago, BBC1, 12.05am
A man prepares to leave home to do voluntary work in Africa. His mother plans to see him off with a family get-together at their holiday home in the Isles of Scilly, but the gathering only exposes the deep-seated conflicts between them. Drama, starring Tom Hiddleston, Kate Fahy and Lydia Leonard. (2010)

TUESDAY
A Wife's Nightmare, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. A woman's life is turned upside down by the arrival of a teenage girl claiming to be her husband's long-lost daughter. Drama based on a true story, with Jennifer Beals. Edited for sex. (2014)

WEDNESDAY
Notorious, Channel 4, 12.35am
Biopic of Notorious B.I.G., whose rise to fame took him from being a Brooklyn street hustler and crack dealer to become a respected and influential rap artist, before he was brutally murdered at the age of 24. Starring Jamal Woolard, Derek Luke, Dennis LA White and Angela Bassett. (2009)



Notorious, Wednesday, Channel 4, 12.35am

THURSDAY
Expecting Amish, Channel 5, 3.15pm
Premiere. An Amish teenager returning home from a year away realises she is pregnant, and faces being ostracised from her family. Drama, starring AJ Michalka and Alyson Stoner. (2014)

FRIDAY
Amy, Channel 4, 9pm
Premiere. Documentary portrait of soul, jazz and R'nB singer-songwriter Amy Winehouse, whose untimely death in July 2011 followed a well-publicised history of drugs and alcohol abuse. Director Asif Kapadia traces Amy's rise and demise over the 13 years preceding her death, telling her story via her music and autobiographical song lyrics, video footage shot by friends and family, archive television clips, plus voiceover interviews with those who were personally and professionally close to her. Contributors include Pete Doherty, Mitch Winehouse, Tony Bennett, Mark Ronson and Tyler James. (2015)

Wagons roll in the Wild West of Yorkshire

What's this? A rootin' tootin' Western from ITV? Well, not exactly. Although some of the pictures released by the broadcaster to promote the show look as if they're set in America's wild west, the truth couldn't be further from that.

Jessica Raine heads the cast of this Western after all. However, the series has been created and written by Steve Thompson, who numbers Sherlock and Doctor Who on his CV, while other key figures in its production have worked on such acclaimed shows as Vera, Cilla, Marchlands, Mrs Biggs and The Widower.

Doesn't sound that exciting does it? In fact, you're probably wishing it was a Western after all. However, the series has been created and written by Steve Thompson, who numbers Sherlock and Doctor Who on his CV, while other key figures in its production have worked on such acclaimed shows as Vera, Cilla, Marchlands, Mrs Biggs and The Widower.

Jericho is the name of the shanty town created by the misfits, pioneers, settlers and outcasts who arrive in the area to work on the construction.

in the shadow of the Ribbleshead Viaduct in North Yorkshire. Shanty towns tended to be named after famous battles or biblical places. Jericho was the one at Ribbleshead so we chose it for the name of the series.

"These shanty towns started to appear when they were building the railways across Yorkshire in the 1870s. These places were like wild west towns. So the idea of making a British Western was new and exciting to me."

And that also goes some way to explaining those puzzling publicity photographs...

Raine plays Annie Quintain, a penniless widow who, along with her teenage children, sets up a boarding house populated by labourers.

"Annie learns about this navy town 15 miles away so they get on a train and go out there," explains the writer. "And it is just like being on a wagon train to the wild west. It's people going out to the frontier because the frontier is free."

"That's how America was created and it was the same with this culture

in Yorkshire at the time. The frontier was the only free place where you could actually go and start a new life."

It's clear that Thompson admires Annie's spark, and he claims she was based on someone he once knew.

"She had three young kids and then her husband left her," he reveals. "She's one of those people who thought, 'Right, I'm going to build a new life for myself and my kids.' She was determined to stand on her own and never be reliant on anyone ever again. She learned how to do plastering and wiring and she fitted her own kitchen."

"She was never going to rely on a tradesman. Annie Quintain is like that. For her, the great motivation in her life is her children. My mother was the same. She was a fanatical mum and a Yorkshirewoman as well. Whatever her kids wanted she was going to get it for them. So this poor woman is in a navy town with no money and she's decided she's going to build a business empire."

And over the next eight weeks, we're going to watch her do it.



Jessica Raine stars in Jericho, Thursday, ITV, 9pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY
Griff's Great Britain
ITV, 8pm

New series. Griff Rhys Jones sets out to explore eight very disparate kinds of quintessentially British terrain, investigating how they have dictated different ways of living, working and playing – both in the past and as they are now – across the entire country, while also unearthing quirky and funny facts en route. He begins by heading to the South Downs, which are situated in Hampshire and East and West Sussex, taking to the air for a bird's eye view and attempting to get to know one of the region's woolliest inhabitants.

When Ant and Dec Met the Prince: 40 Years of the Prince's Trust
ITV, 9pm

Anthony McPartlin and Declan Donnelly are granted an insight into the work of the Prince's Trust as they accompany Prince Charles on a number of engagements, as well as meeting people who have benefited directly from the charity. The duo hear anecdotes from his days in the Royal Navy and his life as a grandfather, and also speak to those closest to the prince, including the Duchess of Cornwall and his sons William and Harry. Plus, Ant and Dec pay an emotional visit to the set of Byker Grove.

TUESDAY
Big Fat Quiz of Everything
Channel 4, 9pm

Not content with asking questions about what happened in a given year, Jimmy Carr is now testing famous faces' knowledge of art, literature, television, music, geography, politics, science and celebrity from the last 100,000 years of human history. Jonathan Ross, Chelsea Peretti, Jack Whitehall, Mel Giedroyc, Richard Ayoade and Noel Fielding try to carry off the title by proving they know how witch hunters determined if someone was a witch, and which 1970s board game was accused of selling sex in a box.

Celebrity Big Brother: Live Launch
Channel 5, 9pm

New series. The fly-on-the-wall fun begins once more as Emma Willis invites a fresh group of famous faces to move in together and have their every word and move recorded for the enjoyment of the viewing public. They will be entering a house transformed into a striking theatrical setting that reflects the vaudeville theatres.



Griff's Great Britain, Monday, ITV, 8pm

WEDNESDAY
Midsomer Murders
ITV, 8pm

When wealthy landowner Gregory Lancaster's body goes missing on the night of his death, a sinister web of secrets and lies is exposed in the village of Little Malton. As DCI Barnaby, DS Nelson and new Forensic Pathologist Kam Karimore investigate the mysterious crime, they find themselves drawn into a macabre world of body-snatching. Detective drama, starring Neil Dudgeon, Gwilym Lee, Manjinder Virk and Helen Baxendale.

THURSDAY
Death in Paradise
BBC1, 9pm

We're in the cold, dreary post-Christmas slump, so what better time for this detective drama to return and inject a little sunshine into our lives – even if the tropical locations do come with a side order of murder? The run begins with DI

Humphrey Goodman (Kris Marshall) and the team being called in to investigate when millionaire environmentalist and scientist Dan Hagen (Julian Ovenden, fresh from ITV's recent live version of The Sound of Music) is shot on his boat while out at sea.

FRIDAY
Mr Selfridge
ITV, 9pm

The lavish period drama returns for a fourth and final run, set nine years after the last series. It finds Harry Selfridge at the apex of his power, a retail giant in the roaring twenties. Rumours of his latest romantic dalliances are the talk of the social circuit at Victor Colleano's decadent new nightclub. At home, Rosalie's daughter, Tatiana is the apple of Harry's eye, his mother Lois is as stoic as ever, and the vivacious Violette now lives in Paris.

Royal Wives at War
BBC2, 9pm

A revealing look at the abdication crisis of 1936, through the eyes of the two women at its very heart. In a number of dramatised monologues set in 1967, Elizabeth the Queen Mother (Emma Davies) and Wallis Simpson (Gina McKee) look back at the dramatic events that led to King Edward VIII giving up the throne for the woman he loved.

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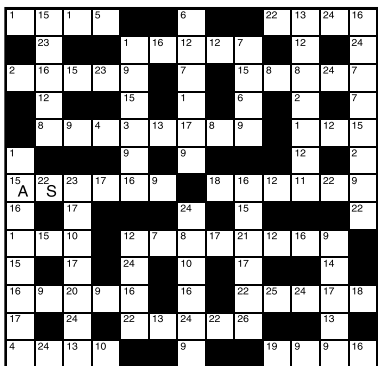
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BRAIN GYM

Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION:

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
N	G	X	M	P	I	Q	F	T	V	O	U	E
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
S	H	Z	B	A	L	Y	K	C	J	D	B	W

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

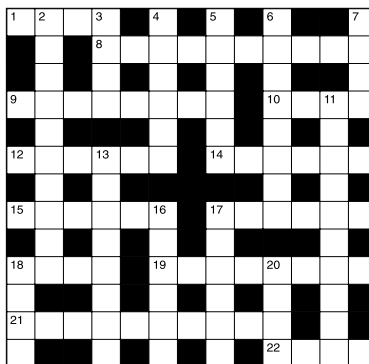
Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Cut 7 with 1 for a change (4)
8. I am to take situation involving punishment task (10)
9. The era of scarcity is not a long one (8)
10. Harvest rotten fruit taken from (4 4)
12. Profane oaths wear out as weapons (6)
14. Sucker put in bus to London (6)
15. Vest so made for giving warmth (6)
17. The gambler has reformed? (6)
18. At that time contained in earthenware jugs (4)
19. No, I'd rise to ridicule (8)
21. A very small volume needed for meeting records (6-4)
22. Little Edward in a whirl in the water (4)

Down

2. Does it indicate the darkest hour when they're on guard? (5-5)
3. Have something to eat right on the jetty (4)
4. A passer of weapons (6)
5. Value female donkey? (6)
6. Begin to be tip-top tinker? (5,3)
7. As obtained from a bad-tempered photographer? (4)
11. Honorably open - but the directors won't understand (5-5)
13. Being very hungry, talk wildly but with intelligence (8)
16. Very wet turf on lair (6)
17. Prohibit line on handcart (6)
18. Apparently I should receive this book (4)
20. Consideration for which one would leave (4)



Quick Clues:

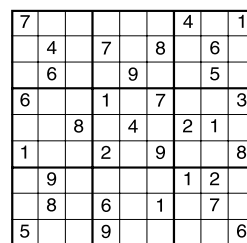
Across

1. Rule (4)
8. Improve (10)
9. Provident (8)
10. Kind (4)
12. Handwriting (6)
14. Strain (6)
15. Hesitated (6)
17. Chastise (6)
18. Volcano (4)
19. Saucy (8)
21. Prudence (10)
22. Entrance (4)

Down

2. Sorcery (10)
3. Gape (4)
4. Let (6)
5. Zodiac sign (6)
6. Brothers (8)
7. Small valley (4)
11. Afterthought (10)
13. Example (8)
16. Make moist (6)
17. Wan (6)
18. Purposes (4)
20. Pain (4)

Sudoku



Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3×3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S
SOLUTIONS >

7	1	2	6	4	8	9	5
5	3	6	1	9	2	7	4
9	4	8	7	3	5	1	2
2	6	4	5	8	7	3	9
3	5	7	4	1	9	6	8
1	8	9	2	6	3	5	7
8	2	5	3	7	6	4	1
4	7	3	9	2	1	8	6
6	9	1	8	5	4	2	3

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
CRYPTIC: Across: 7 Blade; 8 Abashed; 9 Old hand; 10 Note; 12 Stand aside; 15 Implore; 16 Elude; 18 Eternity; 19 Raffish; 21 Steady; 22 Nicer. Down: 1 Absolution; 2 Cards; 3 Betts; 4 Madden; 5 Baseball; 6 Cheerio; 7 There; 8 Thirteen; 9 Thousand; 14 Spotted; 16 Arrays; 17 Pitch; 20 Fine. **QUICK - Across:** 7 Impel; 8 Albumen; 9 Commons; 10 Trend; 12 Pugnacious; 15 Open-handed; 18 Tinge; 19 Migrant; 21 Concede; 22 Spurn. Down: 1 Discomfort; 2 Spume; 3 Also; 4 Pass on; 5 Obstacle; 6 Emperor; 11 Discontent; 13 Unheeded; 14 Meaning; 16 Number; 17 Gamut; 20 Gasps.

Quiz

1. In which European country is the region of Aragon?
2. What were the forenames of W.H. Auden?
3. On which island is the bay of Pigs?
4. In the film industry, what is a key grip?
5. Who constructed the labyrinth in Greek mythology?
6. What is a lava-lava?
7. What is the fifth sign of the zodiac?
8. In what year did rock singer Jim Morrison die?
9. What sort of flower is a naked lady?
10. Who wrote the play Separate Tables?

Last week's solutions:

Quiz: 1 Michael Foot: 2 Greece:

3 Sancho Panza: 4 July and August:

5 Potato: 6 Wildebeest: 7 Cavy: 8 16 or 18:

9 Venus: 10 Austria.

Niner: FULMINATE

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

6721 gives a servant,
32458 gives an airman,
3746298 gives a fortune-teller.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Saturday 9th January LOWFIELD FANTASTIC BAND
Sunday 10th January DEBBIE DERE
FEMALE VOCALIST
Saturday 16th January BURGUNDY SUPERB
FUNCTION BAND
Sunday 17th January EMILY ROSE FEMALE VOCALIST
Saturday 23rd January DJ SHAMMO MR
ENTERTAINMENT HIMSELF
Sunday 24th January NATASHA MARIE
FEMALE VOCALIST
Saturday 30th January MATTHEW WILLIAMS
Sunday 31st January TEGAN McDERMOTT

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Thursday 14th
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COUNTRY FRIENDS

Saturday 16th
KELLY JAMES
Female Vocalist

Thursday 21st
NEW WASHBOARD SYNCOPATORS

Saturday 23rd
WAYNE TULSA
Male Vocalist

Thursday 28th
KNOXVILLE HIGHWAY
Country & Western Band

Saturday 30th
DEBBIE ALEXANDER
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Refined but still lots of fun

By Sharon Walters

Going along to a Mazda dealer for a post Christmas scout for a new car is very tempting.

There are several finance offers across Mazda's award-winning SUV line-up – the CX-3 and CX-5. Plus these crossover models are offered in both front-wheel drive and winter friendly all-wheel drive.

Named 'Best Crossover' at the 2015 Scottish Car of the Year Awards, the new Mazda CX-3 line-up has efficient petrol and diesel SKYACTIV engines across 18 models.

With a choice of 11 petrol and seven diesel variants, the car comes with generous standard equipment and Mazda's latest i-ACTIVSENSE safety systems. SE models

feature 16-inch alloy wheels, plus heated and power folding mirrors, while SE-L models add rear privacy glass and front LED fog lights.

At the top of the range, the Sport Nav is the first car in the class to come with LED headlights.

With its unique nocturnal appearance further enhanced by signature LED rear lights; 18-inch Gunmetal machined alloy wheels and chrome-accent door sills wrap up the distinctive look.

Whichever engine you choose, you get the same sharp exterior styling. The CX-3 has Mazda's bold Kodo design treatment, and takes its cues from the larger CX-5 and the 2 supermini. So you get the same bold front grille and mix of daring curves and creases.

I recently spent a week in the 2.0 litre 120ps 2WD which at £20,495 on-the-road proved an excellent package. The cabin is premium class and on top of the standard specification of seven-inch colour touch-screen, DAB radio, Bluetooth® and a multi-function steering wheel also gets navigation including three-years free European map updates, Bose® sound system, smart keyless entry and, in another first for the sector, Mazda's Active Driving Display head-up display system – a real bonus.

CX-3 has a user-friendly cabin layout with high material quality and design. Included are heated front seats, automatic climate control and rain-sensing wipers.

Active safety equipment includes a full complement of standard airbags, hill hold assist, tyre pressure monitoring system and dynamic stability control are standard across the range. SE-L and Sport Nav models also get Mazda's lane departure warning system and smart city brake support. All models get



You get a good looker, quality interior and bags of equipment but not at the expense of having fun behind the wheel

cruise control, while rear parking sensors are standard from SE-L grade onwards, and Sport Nav models also have a reversing camera.

With a flexible cargo board boot floor, which can be raised to provide a flat load space when the standard 60:40 split fold rear seats are tumbled, the 350-litre boot is very practical.

So you get a good looker, quality interior and bags of equipment but all that does not come at the expense of having fun behind the wheel. Steering is well-weighted

and is quick and precise, allowing you to place the vehicle exactly where you want it on the road. The high-riding stance does not detract from that driving engagement – the car feels composed and stable through winding roads. A pleasant drive through the Highlands and across to Mallaig clearly showed the car's ability and how nimble it can be to move in and out of those tight bends.

Excellent refinement and upmarket interiors – it's easy to see why the new Mazda CX-3 is so popular with UK car buyers.

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*Participating Retailers only. £500 Free Fuel offer not available on VIVA, Corsa Sting, Corsa Sting R and Run Out Astra and cannot be used in conjunction with the Vauxhall Scrappage Allowance. £500 Free Fuel will be supplied via pre-pay debit card. Purchase only, cannot be used to withdraw cash. Refer to www.vauxhall.co.uk/ offers or contact your local Retailer for details. Offer applies to private individuals, Vauxhall Partners and small businesses 1-24 units (purchase only). All other customers are excluded. Offer restricted to eligible, selected new vehicles ordered between 27 December 2015 and 11 January 2016 and registered by 31 March 2016. Terms, conditions and exclusions apply. #Official EU-regulated test data are provided for comparison purposes and actual performance will depend on driving style, road conditions and other non-technical factors. Correct at time of going to press.



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DRIVETIME



New Astra works hard and is loyal companion

By Matt Kimberley

It's the most important Vauxhall arriving this year. Has the compact hatch got the magic to take on its key rivals?

The Astra is an underrated, but evergreen compact family hatch, as happy taking the kids on a short break away as it is cutting a path through the city. There's no radical departure for 2016, although the sharp-eyed will notice a nip here and a tuck there.

There's an excellent new colour touch-screen that's standard across the range. It gives the whole product a lift and helps it make a better first impression.

It's a sharp-looking thing, if a bit on the conservative side. Being built in Britain won't do its appeal this side of Dover any harm, either. Whichever model you choose, you end up with a pleasantly stylish and definitely inoffensive car. You'll never object to having it on your drive.

It's quite sensitive to trim grades, though, so whereas the fantastic top-spec cars with all the interior trimmings look like they've come straight from the top drawer, the fragile rubberised handbrake grip and cheap-looking plastics on the low-end versions leave a lot to be desired and can start to look tatty very quickly.

Happy

There's a handy boot at the back, more than big enough for most tasks, but if you're toting babies, you'll struggle to get much more than a chunky pushchair into it without putting the conveniently split rear seats down.

Front seaters will be happy enough, especially with the uncommonly well-shaped seat backs that give superb lumbar support. The glove box is shed-spacious but the door pocket shapes and cupholder designs could be better thought out.

Under the bonnet there is a 1.0-litre turbocharged petrol engine. It can't make the Astra a rocket ship, but if you're gentle, you'll see fuel economy you'd struggle to better in an eco-diesel. I found it no problem to hover around 60mpg in relatively traffic-free driving. Alright, you do need to put some effort in, but the potential is there.

The dinky engine is perfect for chopping around urban and suburban routes. It's impressively linear once the turbo kicks in, making it smooth, forgiving and easy to get used to. It warms up faster than a moth on a sunbed and it's perfect for no-fuss short trips. The five-speed gearbox is light and precise, with tall gearing that partly offsets the lack of a sixth, but it's clear this version isn't meant to cover serious motorway mileage. It's a nice steer, though, responding quite keenly to tugs at the wheel and scampering along winding roads with gusto. The brakes on this nearly-new car were very grabby, but that should hopefully settle down with mileage.

The Astra is a solid car. You know what you're getting and, although some of the materials on basement models aren't up to scratch, at the very least, the car does a good job of providing straight-down-the-line mid-size transport for people who don't want to spend the extra on a slightly more spacious compact crossover or SUV.

Vauxhall dealers are usually open to a little haggling, too, so don't take the retail price as gospel. You should pay less than for a broadly equivalent crossover, so there's good value to be had here even if the fashion is currently for faux-4x4s.

This is a car for ordinary people. People who want a well-rounded car to give them transport, enough space and, crucially, the ability to cope with everything from taking the in-laws to Sunday lunch to taking the kids to the seaside. Parents will appreciate this sort of versatility, while some might prefer the lower seating position relative to SUVs, for the better outward view it offers during low-speed manoeuvres.

This car summed up in a single word: Studious. If this car was a student at Hogwarts School of Witchcraft and Wizardry, it would be in Hufflepuff house. It's a hard worker and a loyal companion.

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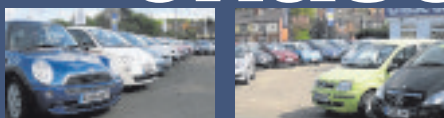
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Race car for road setting new limits



Honda celebrated 50 years of sales in Britain in 2015 and it's been a golden year for the company in many ways.

The icing on the cake was first and third places in the British Touring Car Championship for the popular duo of Gordon Shedden and Wolverhampton's Matt Neal in the new Civic Type-R.

It's a case of just desserts for the engineers, too, who produced a superb handling car which manages to wring a brutal 306bhp out of a mere two-litre capacity engine, setting new limits for a front wheel drive car.

Performance figures of 0 to 62mph in 5.7 seconds and a top speed of 167 mph – combined with superior cornering ability – had already given it the record for the breed on the tough Nurburgring in a time which put it up there with supercars costing three or four times as much. And that really is another figure to leave you speechless: how Honda manages to sell what is billed as 'a race car for the road' for £30,000, the price of a fairly ordinary family saloon. It's little wonder that not only is there a full order book for the car.

You'd expect Honda to produce a good engine: it is the world's biggest manufacturer of engines, powering everything from grass trimmers to Formula One cars. But conquering the Nurburgring is not just about outright power, it's about stability and dynamic handling too with 73 bends in 12.93 miles. That's how the Type-R won itself a place among the big engineered exotica by completing its run in seven minutes, 50.63 seconds.

This breadth of ability is what Honda's engineers were looking for and why enthusiasts had to wait for five years for the car, which is no tweaked version of the family-friendly Civic or an upgraded version of its predecessor. The engine, for example, combines Honda's thrill-a-minute VTEC variable valve system with a turbocharger for the first time.

Power delivery feels, and sounds, very different. Gone is the sudden surge of acceleration and change in engine note at around 5,500rpm as the VTEC system's second cams and high-lift valve operation comes in and sends you screaming towards the 8,000rpm limit. For the Type R the engineers turned the system on its head, with the high valve lift phase occurring at low to medium revs to eliminate turbo lag and give you more grunt lower down. The result is smooth, accessible power right across the rev range. Now you get all those 306 horses at 6,500rpm, while maximum torque (a huge 400Nm) is there from just 2,500rpm.

In standard mode, the Type-R is still a genuine performer on the roads, a comfortable ride by sporting car standards, and decent economy – up to 38.7mpg and a 170g/km CO2 rating. Press the 'Plus R' button and it becomes a very different beast. The instrument dials glow red, the steering and throttle responses sharpen up dramatically and the suspension gets 30 per cent stiffer. It's a car most buyers will want to take on a track day.

The Type-R has a mixture of mechanical, aerodynamic and electronic features to ensure you can out the power down safely. The adaptive damping system works on all four wheels together or independently. Its very effective during extreme cornering too, keeping the car flat and stable for optimum grip. Try hard enough on the track, and especially in the wet, and of course the Type R will still want to move sideways, but it's toned down – more of a warning than creating any nasty oversteer/understeer surprises.

The Type R's natural responsiveness is boosted by a new 'agile handling assist' feature, working with the more familiar electronic stability control. In simple terms you get a more rapid steering response and 'turn-in' because it applies a light, imperceptible touch of brake to the inner wheel.

The engineers also developed a new limited slip differential, balanced drive shafts and a unique 'dual axis' design for the front end which work together to improve traction and cut torque steer. It also means you can safely put down more power, and earlier, through a corner.

It's interesting to note the first Honda Civic sold here back in 1972 was a classic Mini-sized hatchback with an 1,169cc engine. Now there is a whole range of Civic hatchbacks and tourers with the ultra-economical 1.6 diesel among the best sellers. But there's no shortage of buyers either for what is, undoubtedly, the ultimate front wheel drive performance car at a fraction of the price of some of its exotic rivals.

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- cruise control with speed limiter
- auto lights and wipers



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in memoriam

JONES

Glyn
Son

December 29, 2014.

You left behind an aching heart that loved you so sincere.

It's Christmas Glyn and I'm sorry I can't celebrate with you, but I will always be thinking of you.

Love you, Sweetheart.

Your loving Mom Lorraine.

X X X

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MEAKIN

Tom

30.12.2013.

Two years

Time slips by and life goes on, but you are always in our thoughts.

Rest in peace Tom.

Loving Wife Mo and Families.

deaths

ANSLOW

Christopher

(Former Lead Singer Of Penny Farthing And Local Councillor)

Passed away peacefully on Thursday, December 10, 2015, aged 69 years.

Loving Husband of Wendy, and devoted Dad to Lucie. Much loved and sadly missed by all his Family and Friends.

His Funeral Service is to be held on Monday, January 4, 2016 at 11.00 a.m. at St Stephen's Church, followed by Committal at Stafford Crematorium.

Family flowers only please. Donations, if desired, can be made in Chris' memory in support of the local Chemotherapy Unit.

All inquiries c/o

A.J. Sellman
Family Funeral Directors
70 Church Street,
Cannock, WS11 2JAN
01543 502322

WOOLLEY

Reverend Elaine

Passed away peacefully, with Family by her side, at New Cross Hospital on December 13, 2015 aged 73.

She will be remembered as the Minister of various Churches including Trinity Church, Hednesford, Chadsmoor Methodist and Pelsall Methodist.

Her Committal will be at Bushbury Crematorium, at 2.15pm on January 6, 2016, followed by a Thanksgiving Service at Trinity Church, Hednesford, at 3.15pm.

Family flowers only, donations by request to MHA Care Homes or The Gambia Fellowship Association.

All inquiries c/o

A.J. Sellman
Family Funeral Directors
70 Church Street,
Cannock, WS11 2JAN
01543 502322

birthday remembrances



DUNNING

Sheila

December 31, 1941.

We will be together, when forever has gone.

All my love

Doug

X X X

FAMILY ANNOUNCEMENT CUSTOMER INFORMATION

Please note that the deadline for our weekly Cannock Chronicle is 11.30am every Tuesday for the same weeks edition.

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devon

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what's on

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business opportunities

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general

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High fives as Walsall soar to the summit

Walsall 2 Peterborough 0

WALSALL made it five straight wins in League One after securing a 2-0 victory over promotion rivals Peterborough at the Banks's Stadium on Monday.

Late goals from Jason Demetriou and George Evans ensured the Saddlers will begin 2016 on top of the table following an entertaining clash watched by 6,142 spectators.

A lively opening saw both teams move the ball around well, but it was the Saddlers who registered the game's first real chance inside the opening five minutes.

Sam Mantom's drive seemed destined to nestle in the bottom corner, but instead cannoned off the base of the post.

Peterborough responded with Christopher Forrester hitting a fierce drive from 25 yards that was expertly beaten away by Neil Etheridge.

Etheridge later tipped a Conor Washington effort over, palmed away a Michael Bostwick cross-cum-shot and then touched over a Marcus Maddison drive.

Boss Sean O'Driscoll swapped Mantom for Forde with 15 minutes left and it proved a master-stroke as the Saddlers took the lead moments later. A quick break saw Forde play in Demetriou on the overlap and the full-back kept his composure to hit a low drive which deflected off Maddison and into the net.

Walsall made their third substitution by introducing Morris for Cook. And once again the change made all the difference as Morris produced a mazy run and found Evans who poked home in the last minute of the 90.

Saddlers out of Den and into top spot

Millwall 0 Saddlers 1

IF there were any lingering questions Sean O'Driscoll had about the character of this Walsall team, this is likely to have answered them.

Not only did the result deliver a second straight win for the new head coach, the performance – while far from perfect – included all of the qualities which will be needed over the second half of the season, as the Saddlers chase a promotion which looks well within their capabilities.

Dominant before the break and ahead thanks to Milan Lalkovic's seventh goal of the season, the second half saw them pass a test of nerve to hold off a late rally from the hosts.

This was their fourth successive League One win and sent them jumping back over Burton and into top spot.

Burntwood hope to recoup for 2016

Tamworth 44 Burntwood 0

AFTER a tough run of fixtures, Burntwood will have welcomed the Christmas break.

They have little to show for four games on the road against promotion contenders in two different leagues and will enjoy the time off.

The latest result gave Tamworth, who are top of the table, their tenth win on the trot, their only loss coming on the opening day of the season.

The hosts made the ideal start with a try after just two minutes. The Tamworth centre cut a good line through the middle to make the line although it wasn't converted. With a buoyant home side and the wind against them, the visitors were on the back foot for all of the half. A penalty goal attempt went wide of the posts but the subsequent 22 drop out went direct into touch to keep the pressure on after 12 minutes.

From the home scrum, the ball was moved right and back left towards the posts with their forwards rumbling round the corner.

It needed a steal by Dave Yardley to halt the move. It also cost a home player a yellow card but it had little affect on the flow of play.

While the player was sidelined, Tamworth went further ahead. A penalty award was kicked to the corner.

Possession was spread wide and a slick pass saw the No 14 go in for a converted try on 17 minutes. Then Tamworth scrummaged close the try line.

After two attempts the ball was moved to the left winger down the short side for a score in the corner.

A prolonged period of stoppage time brought Tamworth their bonus point try.

A fumble at a line out saw the hosts gain possession and move the ball wide for another try in the left corner.

The hosts were awarded a penalty try.

In the last 10 minutes the home forwards worked upfield before crossing the line from a rolling maul.

The Tamworth forwards staged a repeat performance five minutes later, the left winger scoring.

Pheobe aims high for shot at glory

A TALENTED teenage shooter has her sights set firmly on international glory after qualifying for the Team England National Squad Academy.

Pheobe Taylor, from Hednesford, fired a personal best in the 10m air rifle to earn a place on the squad and continue her meteoric rise since first taking up the sport little more than a year ago.

The 15-year-old, who was already a member of the GB junior rifle team, will now target a place in the national squad at the 2018 Commonwealth Games.

"This is a definite step up in class for Pheobe," explained stepdad Martyn Buttery.

"She has been marked as a potential squad member for the British team in 2018 or maybe 2022."

"We have to remember she is only 15 but so far nothing seems to be fazing her."

Taylor's interest in the sport has plenty to do with Buttery, himself a successful shooter who has competed at a national level and in the past been part of the British squad.

But even he has been surprised by her rapid progress since first picking up a rifle last September at Rugeley Rifle Club, where they are both now members.

"She just asked: 'Can I have a go at it?' and things just went from there," he said.

"There is no question Pheobe has an element of natural talent and she really took to it."

"By January, she was already in the British junior squad."

"Her other strength is the ability to take things on board. She learns very quickly."



Aiming high, Pheobe Taylor of Hednesford showing her shooting skills

Presented

Pheobe's success this year has seen her presented with the Wilkinson Award for most improved shooter, while she has already represented Britain's juniors twice, in Oldenburg, Germany, and at the Junior International in Surrey.

As a member of National Squad Academy (TENS) she will have access to specialist coaching, including a nutritionist. The secret to success in shooting is not, as many might surmise, merely a case of pointing and firing.

"You have to be a professional athlete," explained Martyn. "So much of it comes down to

the mind as at the top level competitions are decided by less than millimetres."

"There is so much to consider, from your diet, to how to control your heart rate."

"The best shooters are the ones who can handle the pressure and so far Pheobe has shown she can do that."

"She is now, as you might say 'in with the big boys but we are confident she will do well."

"For a 15-year-old girl, she's pretty amazing."

In the longer-term, Buttery believes Taylor can target a place in the 2020 Olympics. In the short-term, she has provided another boost for the Rugeley club, who are now represented by two members in the TENS, with Burntwood's Lizzie Bradbury having already qualified.

"It is fantastic new for the club to have two young members doing so well," continued Buttery. "We are very proud of them."

Royal seal for Wolves second win on the trot

Charlton 0 Wolves 2

WELL who, apart from the Queen, saw this coming?

Her Majesty certainly did. On Christmas Day at 3pm she appeared to pledge her allegiance to the Wolves cause in her Christmas speech, referencing the club's famous motto by declaring to the nation that 'darkness has not overcome light'.

Lo and behold, 74 hours later, Wolves have two sorely-needed victories in the bag – and two clean sheets for good measure.

Coincidence? Maybe. But for Wolves and Kenny Jackett light has temporarily overcome darkness, and their season may have been saved as a result.

There has most definitely been light in recent weeks in the shape of Jordan Graham, whose form would get the royal seal of approval.

Here he netted his first senior goal to give Wolves the lead – the sixth game in a row they've scored first – shortly after half time.

And then seven minutes from time came Graham's sixth assist in just his eighth Wolves appearance, a corner which was put past his own keeper by Harry Lennon, under pressure from Danny Bath.

This was by no means a one-man show, though.

As against Reading, Wolves defended for their lives, but here they did so with far more organisation and composure.

They also broke in numbers at every opportunity, particularly the breathless Conor Coady who excelled in a box-to-box role and covered a tremendous amount of ground, and were good value for their win.

Things turn ugly as win found at last

Wolves 1 Reading 0

IN football terms this was consequentialism in its purest form.

For half the game Wolves aspired to nothing more adventurous than sitting in their own third of the field and defending their fragile 1-0 lead.

Aesthetically, this was the equivalent of a rhino dancing the waltz. It was ugly, it was desperate, it was graceless. But it was also necessary.

And Wolves won, thanks to James Henry's 18th minute header.

Wolves did get lucky though.

After the break, the tactics took on a crude approach. Reading plundered 24 shots to Wolves' six. With just three of those on target, Carl Ikeme was largely untroubled, although that didn't stop him almost conceding through a horrible blunder when the ball slipped through his fingers.

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**Pheobe aiming
for glory shot**

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Point saved by Sullivan's late leveller

Chasetown 1 Romulus 1
CHASETOWN missed the chance to move into the top seven and within a point of the play-off places as there were held to a point by Romulus on Monday.

Both goals came in the closing stages, with the visitors taking the lead.

Inside two minutes, Stan Mugisha took the ball beyond the keeper Stewart Parsons but Cameron Lee got back to clear the danger.

Mike Williams had Parsons in all sorts of trouble with a looping cross, but the frame of the goal came to Romulus' rescue.

Paul Sullivan twisted and turned through the Roms defence, but Parsons got down brilliantly to save for a corner.

Barry Fitzharris was a whisker over the bar with a long-range effort before Parsons made a low save to deny Mugisha just before the half-time interval.

Midway through an even second half, substitute Jono Gould opened up the visitors' defence and, as he was tackled, the loose ball ran to Mugisha, who struck the crossbar with a first-time shot.

Chasetown looked the most likely to open the scoring and Ryan Wynter dragged a shot inches wide of the post.

Sullivan had the ball in the net after Gould and Wynter combined, but Roms were saved by the assistant's offside flag.

In the final minutes, the Scholars thought they had earned a late penalty as Gould was pulled back attempting to reach a Sullivan pass, but referee Dwyer turned away the appeals.

Romulus took a shock lead against the run of play with a goal from former Scholar Chad Degville, which deflected past John Bateman. Chasetown went straight up the other end and Sullivan beat Parsons with a low shot to his right.

The Scholars travel to Loughborough Dynamo on Saturday.

Craddock off but leaders Rangers edge out Scholars

Stafford Rangers 2 Chasetown 1
STAFFORD claimed the derby bragging rights but lost Josh Craddock to a straight red card and Ben Haseley with a recurrence of an injury to his arm.

A late winner put Rangers 12 points clear at the top of the Evo-Stik First Division South.

A 978 crowd saw Chasetown take the lead through James Dance on 17 minutes. He went on a mazy run and applied a good finish against his former club.

Rangers captain Christian Dacres equalised four minutes before half-time from close range after Haseley had seen his initial shot parried by John Bateman.

Craddock was sent off on 51 minutes for an apparent head butt on Brown and this seemed to give Chasetown some impetus, Paul Sullivan going just wide with a shot and George Washbourne seeing a corner deflected onto the post.

But two minutes from time, substitute George Cuter went on a run from midfield and put fellow sub Joe Thomas away for him to round Bateman and brilliantly slot the ball home for the winner.

Tributes to Honved hero Roy, 86



Legend Swinbourne

LEGENDARY Wolves centre forward Roy Swinbourne, who fired the team to their most famous victory and first league title, has died aged 86.

The striker's goals led Wolves to their first title in the 1953/54 season and provided the catalyst for their famous victory over Hungarian side Honved.

In his career, he made 230 appearances for the club, scoring 114 goals, between 1945 and 1957 and was inducted into the Wolves' Hall of Fame in 2011.

Former players and family members have paid tribute to the Yorkshire-born

footballer, who retired following a knee injury in 1957 and passed away at a nursing home in Kidderminster following a long battle with vascular dementia.

Ron Flowers, who played with Roy during the club's most successful era, said: "Roy grew up just a village down from me and we both came through the Wath Wanderers set-up."

"He was a true gentleman, a perfect bloke and a really good influence to people around him."

After being forced to retire from the game in 1957 due to a knee injury, Roy

worked as a rep for Wolverhampton tyre giant Goodyear, before starting his own successful Midlands-based tyre business.

His wife of 62 years, Betty, 83, added: "I am probably even prouder of Roy for making such a success of his life after being forced to retire from the game than I am of his achievements in sport."

He was in a bad way when he had to stop playing - to pick himself up and do so well showed great strength."

Wolves' chief executive Jez Moxey described the former number nine as 'one of the club's most iconic footballers'.

Town boys get one over on ex-boss

Hednesford 2 AFC Telford Utd 0
HEDNESFORD Town recorded a timely first league win in eight at the expense of former boss Rob Smith on a dramatic Keys Park afternoon.

First-half goals from former Bucks man Kyle Perry and Adam Thomas were enough to seal the points and move Town clear of the National League North drop zone.

Smith and Larry Chambers were returning to their old stomping ground for the first time but it was new Pitmen boss Frank Sinclair, in charge of his first home game, that came out on top.

A crowd of 962 saw a series of early stoppages, including visiting shot-stopper James Montgomery going down the tunnel for 10 minutes to fix a dislocated finger, before a football match of sorts finally broke out.

But the visiting Bucks, themselves in all sorts of trouble rooted to the bottom of the table under Smith, had a huge opportunity to take the lead on 38 minutes as Sean Clancy's effort drifted wide.

They were made to pay moments later as Pitmen left-back Matt Regan beat the challenge of Tom Tonks and bent in a delicious cross towards the penalty spot which Perry met with a thumping header which nestled in via the crossbar.

And Sinclair's men took full advantage and doubled their lead just before the break.

Paul Ennis had moved over to the right wing with Thomas switching to the left and it paid dividends as Ennis rode a challenge before lofting a cross to the former Stoke City youngster who belted a first-time half-volley beyond Montgomery.

In added time a 20-man brawl broke out and ex-Telford midfielder Phil Trainer was dismissed for his part in the melee in the only blot on Town's day.

Boss delighted as Saddlers top table

SEAN O'Driscoll hailed his 'excellent' Walsall players as they remained top of League One by beating Peterborough.

Late goals from Jason Demetriou and George Evans ensured O'Driscoll made a hat-trick of wins since replacing Dean Smith at the Banks' Stadium.

It means the Saddlers have won their last five League One fixtures, keeping three clean sheets in the process.

And O'Driscoll was delighted with the way his players overcame Peterborough. "I thought we were excellent," he said. "We showed real tactical nous to add to the undoubted qualities the players have got as people and characters."

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ADAM SUPPLIES PITMEN POWER

FC United of Manchester 1 Hednesford Town 1
HEDNESFORD TOWN picked up a well-deserved point in a 1-1 draw at FC United of Manchester in a match which saw the lights go out at Broadhurst Park.

The Pitmen started on top with Paul Ennis seeing a shot blocked before Matt Regan pulled his effort wide of the post.

Hednesford goalkeeper Dan Crane was called into action in the ninth minute as he rushed to deny Tom Greaves.

Sixty seconds later a great one-two between Ahmed Obeng missed a couple of clear chances for the Pitmen, and it proved costly as FC took the lead when Matthew Wolfenden flicked home a cross into the net from six yards.

It was almost 2-0 straight away but Tyrone Williams made an excellent block inside the box to deny Greaves.

On the half-time whistle, FC United keeper Dave Carnell was called into action again as Ben Bailey's snapshot almost deceived him at the near post.

Skewed

After a good first half showing the Pitmen knew they would have to keep it up in the second period, although it started slowly with Sean Williams seeing a shot from the edge of the box fly wide in a quiet opening 15 minutes.

FC should really have doubled their lead in the 64th minute when they broke down the right and the cross picked out George Thomson, but he skewed his effort wide from 12 yards.

The Pitmen would make them pay as 60 seconds later they were level when Kyle Perry superbly picked out Adam Thomas to head home at the back post. Hednesford were now on top and Thomas was in the action again after 72 minutes when Sean Williams picked him out, but he fired the ball over the bar.

Then, in the space of a minute, first Sean Williams was denied at the United end before Tyrone Williams made a vital interception for the Pitmen in the 77th minute.

With 10 minutes to go the game had another



Adam Thomas heads home the Pitmen equaliser at FC United of Manchester

talking point when one floodlight pylon went out. However, both teams agreed to play on. But when another set failed in the 89th minute, the referee called a halt to proceedings, taking the players off for five minutes until power was restored.

After returning to the field neither side could force a chance on goal in the four minutes of stoppage time, with both settling for a point.

After entertaining - and beating - AFC Telford

United on Boxing Day, the Pitmen return to face Rob Smith's men on Saturday. Kick off at the New Bucks Head is 3pm.

FC United of Manchester: Carnell, Stott, Thurston, Kay, Smyth, Ashworth, Wolfenden (Daniels 84), Sheridan (Lindfield 68), Greaves, Thomson, Winter. Subs not used: Brown, Brownhill, Walwyn

Hednesford Town: Crane, T Williams, Regan, Bailey, Digie, Trainer, Obeng, S Williams, Perry (Thorley 70), Ennis, Thomas (Disney 89). Subs not used: Ransome, Todd, James.

Attendance: 3,421

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